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## **Meltyukhov Mikhail Ivanovich**

### **Stalin's missed chance**

Mikhail Ivanovich Meltyukhov

Stalin's missed chance The

Soviet Union and the struggle for Europe: 1939-1941.

(Documents, facts, judgments)

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### **Introduction**

*The main law of History is not to dare to lie, the second is not to be afraid tell the truth.*

**Pope Leo XIII**

September 1999 marked the 60th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II - largest military-political conflict of the XX century, active participation in which accepted by our country. As in any other events of human history, in history World War II hides a lot of secrets. However, the most controversial is the period from September 1, 1939 to June 22, 1941. This is due both to the complexity of the process the formation of two opposing military-political groups, and with ongoing attempts by official historiographies to present the activities their countries during this period in a more favorable light than it really was. For Russian reader, this period of the Second World War is the prehistory of another

war - the Great Patriotic War, which began with the tragic defeats of the Red Army and became one of the most difficult in the history of the Russian state.

For decades, historians from different countries have sought to answer questions about how the war arose, why a relatively local European conflict turned into a world global war, and who and to what extent is responsible for such a development of events. Of course, the answers to all these questions were given on the basis of the documents available at the time of writing various works, as well as taking into account the political situation. However, the source base of historical research is gradually expanding, and until recently secret documents are becoming available to historians. Naturally, this causes new attempts to comprehend the information that has appeared, to clarify our knowledge of the past. Now this process is going on in Russian historical science as well. In an effort to fully cover all the details of the events that led to the tragedy of 1941, domestic researchers in the 1940s-1980s did a great job on the basis of available sources. However, since the late 1980s the emergence of new documents, the expansion of access to archival funds and the liberation of historians from the harsh ideological dictates of the authorities set the task of rethinking this

Topics.

Domestic historical science is not the first time faced with a similar problem. Similar processes took place in it in the 19th - early 20th centuries. in relation to the study of the history of another Patriotic War - 1812. During the first 50 years, the study of the history of that war was carried out exclusively within the framework of the official version of events, which was supported by the personal proximity of leading historians to the throne. But in the 60s of the 19th century, a process of reassessment of established views began, which was far from easy and painless. As now, there were also enough hasty conclusions, biting statements, the prevalence of emotions over the essence of historical problems. So, in particular, the world-famous epic L.N. Tolstoy "War and Peace". Be that as it may, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the war of 1812, a new fundamental work was published, summarizing the results of research and still retaining a certain scientific significance. Now, almost 90 years later, Russian historical science can rightfully be proud of the results of studying those distant events, which once again confirms the well-known truth - a calm and impartial analysis is always preferable to overly emotional assessments that only obscure the essence of the matter. In the development of research into the history of the Great Patriotic War, apparently, a similar process is going on. For 50 years, within the framework of the official Soviet version of events, formulated back in 1941-1945. and enshrined in the

speeches of the leaders of the Soviet state and the Communist Party, a description of the most important events of the war was given, many documents of those years were published, and an extensive literature on various problems arose. However, it gradually became clearer that the more we learn about the events of those years, the more difficult it is to keep the official version unchanged. Therefore, the ideological control over the study of these topics gradually increased, and by the beginning of the 1980s, the vast majority of studies on the history of the Great Patriotic War began to resemble each other like two drops of water. Naturally, this gave rise to feelings of dissatisfaction and dissatisfaction among many historians: after all, what could be harder for a researcher than knowledge that cannot be made public, discussed with colleagues? This, to a certain extent, explains the boom in historical sensations that swept the country in the second half of the 1980s.

In the early 1990s, the process of reassessing the history of the Soviet Union went far enough, and the thesis about "Stalin's mistakes" that led to the tragic start of the war had already become a commonplace in the literature. By this time, many previously unknown facts and documents had been introduced into scientific circulation, but, unfortunately, due attention was not always paid to the generalization of these materials. This process has developed mainly in

studies of the foreign policy of the USSR in 1939-1941 on the basis of borrowing a number of concepts characteristic of Western historiography of this period. And although these studies, as a rule, did not use a significant array of sources not directly related to the foreign policy activities of the USSR, their appearance was the first step towards revising the official concept of the eve of the Great Patriotic War. Already in 1991, A.G. Dongarov suggested that "behind the events of the first plan in the autumn of 1939 - summer 1941, as if indicating active preparations to repel possible German aggression, there were some secret goals and calculations of the Kremlin, in which the option of a German attack on the USSR simply did not envisaged" 1. A certain reassessment of the military-historical problems on the eve of the war was proposed in the works of B.N. Petrov and V.N. Kiseleva<sup>2</sup> published in 1991-1992, which, however, did not receive a proper response.

Since 1993, the military-political problems on the eve of the Great Patriotic War have been at the center of the discussion caused by the publication in Russia of V. Suvorov's books<sup>3</sup>. Although these works are written in the genre of historical journalism and represent a kind of "layer cake" when the truth is mixed with half-truths and lies, they quite clearly outlined the circle of the least developed problems in historiography. Over the past years, the discussion around the books of V. Suvorov has split into several directions. Some authors simply reject his version. Others reject it, referring to a number of errors and inaccuracies of the author, which, however, have no fundamental significance. Still others, taking into account the controversial and weak provisions of these books, attract new documentary materials for the analysis of the author's version, which confirm the need for further development. act as mentors of Russian historical science.

Be that as it may, the discussion that unfolded led to the identification of new archival documents on the history of the USSR in 1939-1941, indicating that the Soviet leadership, of course, had its own view of the political situation of that period and tried to use it to its advantage. The materials and studies that have appeared have shown that the traditional official version of the exclusively defensive intentions of the USSR is becoming less and less substantiated. Naturally, a new round of discussion did not escape a certain politicization, which was primarily due to Suvorov's support for the old version of the German propaganda about Germany's "preventive war" against the USSR and blaming the Soviet leadership for unleashing World War II. The inconsistency of these theses has already been repeatedly shown in the literature<sup>5</sup>, and the supporters of the traditional version continue to refer to them, thus justifying their refusal But to consider the variant of Soviet offensive preparations. For example, O.V. Vishlev believes that "the desire to prove that the Soviet Union had 'offensive' intentions towards Germany serves to substantiate the old thesis about Hitler's Germany's 'preventive war' against the USSR"<sup>6</sup>. Therefore, everything that speaks in favor of Moscow's "offensive" intentions should be denied always, everywhere and no matter what.

By tradition, the unfolding controversy continues to use non-scientific arguments. Instead of presenting a point of view on the issues under discussion, argued by previously unknown documents and thorough research, some defenders of the traditional version declare the ongoing discussion a manifestation of an "anti-scientific trend" and call for "not allowing" opponents to publish their research<sup>7</sup>. This confirms T. Mann's opinion that "we are more often angry and indignant, opposing some idea, when we ourselves are not too sure of our own position and are internally ready to take the opposite side." As a rule, supporters of the traditional version prefer to debate precisely around the concept of V. Suvorov, which is rather strange, since, perhaps, none of the serious researchers support it in full. As a result, it seems that these problems can be

considered only from the standpoint of the author of "Icebreaker" or from the point of view of the traditional version. However, this is not the case, and the documentary materials and studies of recent years that have become available allow us to propose other conceptual approaches to the problem under discussion. Nevertheless, the defenders of the official version do not stop at outright falsification, just to avoid discussing the problems of 1941 on the basis of the Soviet documents now available and the latest Russian historiography. So, for example, the leadership of the Association of World War II Historians acted when a report devoted to these problems, discussed at a meeting on December 30, 1997, was presented at publication in such a way that everything that did not correspond to the views of V. Suvorov was removed from it. This, apparently, was supposed to give more credibility to the denials of opponents<sup>8</sup> Moreover, falsified documents were also used. So, V.A. Anfilov, in order to substantiate his traditional point

of view, refers to the works of I.V. Stalin (M., 1997) documents: "Speech at an extended meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks (end of May 1941)" and "Conversation with A.M. Lavrov on June 18, 1941" <sup>9</sup>. The first of them should confirm the absence of any offensive intentions from the Soviet leadership, and the second should show that the omniscient Soviet intelligence reported to the Kremlin only the most reliable information about the intentions of Germany, Japan, the USA and other countries. Unfortunately, both of these documents are fakes, the author of which, apparently, is V.M. Zhukhrai, in whose literary and publicistic book they first appeared<sup>10</sup> An analysis of the content of the text of the first of them shows that it is a rather rough compilation from G.K. Zhukov and other materials. Regarding the second document, it is stated that Colonel-General A.M. Lavrov was the head of intelligence and counterintelligence and was personally subordinate to Stalin. However, not a single researcher of the history of Soviet intelligence knows about such a strange special service, and even about its boss, too. By the way, a colonel-general with such a surname in 1941 is also unknown. True, V.M. Zhukhrai prudently writes that A.M. Lavrov is a pseudonym, that is, we have before us another version of the "privy adviser to the leader." The content of his report, which, according to V.M. Zhukhrai, June 12, shows that it is a compilation of materials from contemporary studies of the Second World War. Unfortunately, some authors uncritically took these "documents" on faith and, probably, they will be referred to more than once to confirm the official version.

It should be noted that in the domestic historical literature there are no studies devoted to a comprehensive analysis of the events of 1939-1941. As a rule, this period is considered in various works as a simple prelude to the events of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945. The emergence of this situation was facilitated by the fact that the events of the prehistory of the war, like most other events in Soviet history, had to be considered in the literature exclusively within the framework of the official Soviet version, under which all the new facts accumulated over the past decades and reflecting different aspects of these events were adjusted. Initially, the prevailing version was that the peaceful Soviet country was suddenly attacked by an insidious aggressor. Later, it was supplemented by an indication that the German attack led to such dire consequences due to Stalin's mistakes in assessing the situation. Accordingly, the opinion prevails in the public mind that until June 22, 1941, the Soviet Union was a neutral country that did not participate in the ongoing war in Europe. However, secret documents that have become available to researchers yesterday show that everything was much more complicated. Unfortunately, the expansion of the source base has not led to the emergence of works that would summarize all the facts and documents known to date.

Therefore, in our opinion, the current discussion turned out to be in a situation where the process of introducing new documents into scientific circulation must be supplemented by their comprehensive understanding, which requires the formulation of new concepts of the participation of the Soviet Union in the events of 1939-1941. This will allow, first of all, to sum up some results of the discussion and

take one more step towards a more objective picture of the history of our country during the Second World War. To accomplish this task, it is necessary to analyze the foreign policy activities of the Soviet leadership in the interwar twenty years and in 1939-1941, its views on the events of the European war, the military preparations of the USSR and the content of Soviet propaganda against a broad historical background. Only such a comprehensive study will make it possible to show how justified the revision of the traditional version of Russian historiography is and to give impetus to further study of these problems. To accomplish this task, it is necessary to abandon the double standard in assessing the actions of participants in the events of the eve and the beginning of World War II, which comes from propaganda approaches characteristic of Soviet historical literature.

At the heart of Soviet propaganda, and after it historiography, was the idea that the foreign policy of the state depends on its internal structure. Accordingly, it was concluded that the policy of the capitalist state is exclusively imperialist, while that of the socialist state is purely peace-loving and defensive. In the 1920s-1940s, when only the USSR was considered a socialist state, this idea as a whole seemed to be convincing, but in the 1950s-1980s, when the socialist system arose, it turned out that not all of these states were necessarily in good relations with each other, there were even wars between them. In this case, Soviet propaganda found a way out by declaring a number of socialist countries that pursued a policy independent of Moscow as non-socialist (Yugoslavia, China). On the other hand, it turned out that the vast majority of the so-called capitalist countries are present on the world stage as extras and it is simply impossible to declare them "imperialist predators." All this completely refutes the above postulate about the direct relationship between the socio-political system and the foreign policy of states. A similar thesis is also used by V. Suvorov, who believes that it was the communist ideology, to which he ascribes all possible sins, that was the motive for Soviet foreign policy. To be convinced of the inconsistency of this statement, it is enough to recall at least such famous figures of world history as Thutmose III, Ashurbanipal, Ramses II, Nebuchadnezzar II, Cyrus II, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Trajan, Attila, Charlemagne, Genghis Khan, Napoleon and etc. Not only was none of them a member of the Communist Party, but they did not even know a single communist, which, however, did not in the least prevent them from creating great empires.

In principle, it has long been known that the foreign policy of a state depends primarily on what place this state occupies in the world hierarchy. A "great power" has one policy, a regional one has another, and a small country has a third. In addition, one should take into account the goals that a particular country is trying to achieve. For example, a state may strive to maintain its position in the world, or it may try to increase its status on the world stage. In the first case, as a rule, defensive methods prevail, and in the second, offensive ones. However, there is a difference in this matter as well. Since countries with equal status also compete with each other, the "great power" cannot simply take a defensive position, because this will be a signal to other "great powers" that the enemy is weak and pressure can be increased on him. Therefore, in order to be safe, a "great power" must always demonstrate its strength to both friends and rivals. There is also a certain hierarchy among the "great powers" themselves. So, in the 1920s-1930s, England and France were superpowers (although such a term was not used then - they were simply considered the leading countries of the world). It was this status of these countries that was secured within the framework of the Versailles-Washington system of international relations. In the 1940s and 1950s, the USA and the USSR became superpowers, which was reflected in the Potsdam system of international relations.

Although interstate rivalry is a system-forming factor in international relations, one should not perceive the "great powers" only as "imperialist predators", since they also perform a number of important functions -

establish and maintain world order, concentrate resources for radical environmental improvement and technological breakthroughs. As a rule, the sphere of influence of a "great power" is an area of relatively calm and stable development. That is, the "great powers" perform the function of a leader, stimulating the development of both the region it controls and the world as a whole.

At all times, international politics has been a fierce struggle for control over the available resources, which were taken from a weak neighbor in various ways. The 20th century was no exception, at the very beginning of which another battle of the "great powers" broke out for a new redistribution of the world and its resources. Unfortunately, the Russian Empire was not among the winners in the First World War, which, due to a number of internal and external reasons, was going through an acute crisis (revolution and civil war), which led to its weakening and reduction of its status on the world stage to the role of a regional power. Although the Bolsheviks actively contributed to the collapse of the Russian Empire, they were able to create a new large state on its ruins - the Soviet Union - which faced a choice: accept the status of a regional power or re-engage in the struggle for the return of the status of a "great power". The Soviet leadership in Moscow chose the second alternative and actively embarked on the path of its implementation. The fact that everything was done under the slogans of peacefulness and strengthening of defense capability is quite understandable, any smart leadership tries not to advertise their true

intentions. Therefore, in his study, the author sought to consider Soviet foreign policy without any propaganda blinkers, but from the point of view of the real interests, goals and capabilities of the Soviet Union. At the same time, we are not talking about justifying or accusing the Soviet leadership, as is often practiced in Russian historical literature, which continues the moralizing traditions of Soviet propaganda. The author believes that each reader is able to give his own assessment of the described events on the eve and the beginning of World War II, based on personal preferences and ethical values. This point should be emphasized, since in the vast majority of cases in the described events there are two or more parties, each of which seeks to achieve its goals, defend its interests. In historiography, however, an evaluative approach prevails, when the historian, based on his own likes and dislikes, divides all participants in historical events into "good" and "bad" ("progressive" and "reactionary", etc.), which ultimately leads to certain distortion of historical perspective. This situation is connected not so much with the "maliciousness" of certain researchers, but with the traditionally close relationship between historiography and propaganda, which, in turn, is based on the emotional perception of the world that is characteristic of any person. However, this feature of the human psyche is a breeding ground for the emergence

and consolidation of a prejudiced opinion, which is the most serious obstacle to the development of historical science, which, like any other science, is based on the principle of reasoned proof of conclusions. Therefore, we should not talk about dividing the participants in the historical process into "good" and "bad", but about the perception of history in its entirety as a great drama, in the course of which the acting forces defend their own truth and, because of this, are in a certain sense doomed to a collision. . Of course, such an approach is unusual for everyday consciousness, but only in this way can a historian approach an objective reconstruction of historical reality. Therefore, before giving one or another assessment of the events of 1939-1941, the author tried to generalize the materials known today in order to offer his own answer to the traditional two-pronged question of any historical research: how did the events occur and why did they occur in this way? Of course, this does not mean at all that the author has managed to find definitive answers to all questions and that his research is "the ultimate truth." Due to the versatility of the historical process, the appearance of works of this status is apparently not yet possible at all. The author saw his task in that, on the basis of

generalizations of the sum of the facts known to him, impartially analyze the events of the eve and the beginning of the Second World War at the level of interaction between the USSR and other great powers and, on this basis, clarify the usual views on the

problems of this period. The great connoisseur of the human soul, Honore de Balzac, argued that "there are two stories: official history, which is taught at school, and secret history, in which the true causes of events are hidden." This kind of axiom can be applied to almost any period of human history. The Second World War is no exception, which over the past decades, it would seem, has been studied far and wide. However, as soon as it comes to the calculations and intentions of those in power, some kind of strange eclipse will attack any official historiography and a set of common traditional propaganda phrases is usually reproduced. Soviet historiography was no exception, within which the possibility of unofficial views on the history of our country in the 20th century was completely excluded. As a result, a tradition of touching trust in any official documents and statements of the authorities has developed in Soviet historical literature. Propaganda clichés were repeated countless times in literature, which became an indisputable truth in the public consciousness, and as a rule, any new knowledge was adjusted to this preconceived opinion.

Even now, when it would seem that there is an opportunity to take a more calm and unbiased look at the history of the events on the eve and the beginning of World War II, the inertia of the usual clichés continues to act. So, by publishing finally declassified documents that refute the established official version of events, the authors of these publications consider these documents as confirming it! Such is the hypnosis of preconceived notions. However, an unbiased review of declassified and partly published documents on Soviet history in 1939-1941. shows that the official version of these events is in need of radical modernization on the basis of bringing its theses into line with the documents currently available to historians. This in itself difficult task is even more difficult due to the fact that representatives of official historiography continue to prove that only their traditional concept is the ultimate truth, and a certain unnatural meaning of encroachment is attached to the process of clarifying knowledge on the basis of new facts, which is quite common in any science. on the ground.

So, M.A. Gareev, despite the fact that he himself first published information that back in March 1941, the Soviet military-political leadership determined the approximate date for the start of the war - June 12, claims that "in 1941 the Soviet Union did not have any preventive war against Germany did not and could not think "11 And this despite the fact that all the eyewitnesses of the events unanimously assert that in Moscow they considered the war with Germany inevitable, all the available documents of that period testify to this. Therefore, Moscow not only could, but was obliged to "think" about how to create the most favorable conditions for entering the war with Germany. Otherwise, it should be concluded that the entire Soviet leadership consisted of complete idiots who could not understand obvious things and act in accordance with their interests. It is clear that such an assumption is completely inconsistent with what we know about the owners of the Kremlin and their actions in the 1930s and 1940s. According to V.M. Molotov, who at that

time was the second person in the Soviet leadership after I.V. Stalin, preparations for the inevitable war with Germany, of course, were underway. "Otherwise, why did we have to transfer a total of seven armies from the depths of the country to the western border military districts back in May? This is a great power! Why secretly mobilize eight hundred thousand conscripts and move them to the borders as part of the reserve divisions of military districts?" At the same time, Molotov himself admits that they "did not know exactly the date of the German attack," but the troops were already concentrating. Naturally, the question arises of what will happen after the Red Army deploys on the western borders of the USSR, despite the fact that it is not clear whether

Germany in 1941 in general? "Time was lost," Molotov concludes. "Hitler got ahead of us!" (highlighted by me. M.M.)<sup>12</sup> In what, one wonders, did you get

ahead of me? A definite answer to this question is contained in the now available archival documents of the ideological and propaganda preparation of the USSR for the war, which testify not at all to the defensive intentions of the Soviet leadership. Proponents of the traditional version were never able to refute these materials, but a new argument was found in order not to recognize the obvious. So yes. Volkogonov and A.S. Orlov argue that "no one is aware of any document, plan that would confirm Stalin's plan to attack Germany at a certain time. V.E. Molodyakov echoes him, who admits that there are many "approved moment" <sup>13</sup> ideological documents", but related to · believes that "still not a single officially approved plan (or at least a document it) has been found that provides for the start of hostilities by the Soviet side against Germany or its allies"<sup>14</sup>

Indeed, many documents are still unknown, but not because they were searched for and not found, but because many important archives are closed to unbiased researchers. However, the well-known documents of Soviet military planning, which are indeed the main evidence of the offensive intentions of the USSR, make it possible to doubt the validity of the above statements. Yu.A. Gorkov is absolutely right in calling for a comprehensive study of these documents, which, as far as we know, has not yet been done. Therefore, his assertion that "all documents of the operational plan - from the General Staff to the armies inclusively allow us to conclude that the Soviet Union was not preparing to attack Germany first" <sup>15</sup> seems premature. In the following, specific documents will be cited to reject these preconceived notions. In addition, it should be remembered that Russian historical science has only recently begun to study Soviet history using not only official

documents, but also those that were hidden in the archives with varying degrees of restriction on their use. Therefore, at the moment, historians do not have the opportunity to fully reconstruct the process of making key decisions by the Soviet leadership in 1939-1941, since a significant part of the relevant historical sources is still not available for research. Therefore, researchers are forced to scrupulously reconstruct the past on the basis of a rather limited documentary base, which has nevertheless expanded significantly in recent years, which, together with other materials, makes it possible to transfer discussions to the solid ground of facts. The use of a broad panoramic approach based on the achievements of domestic and foreign historiography on the eve and the beginning of World War II makes it possible to enter new information about the military-political actions of the USSR in 1939-1941. into the general outline of events, expanding our knowledge about this period of the world history of the twentieth century. In recent years, many events in the interwar history of the 20th century have been reassessed in Russian literature. However, unfortunately, often the main motive here is not the desire to deepen our knowledge of that period, but only the desire to

indiscriminately denigrate Soviet foreign policy. For this, as a rule, abstract moral assessments are used, without taking into account the specific historical realities and the mentality of the era. Therefore, in our opinion, one should try to take an unbiased look at the actions of the Soviet leadership in 1939-1941. The author believes that every state has the right to pursue any foreign policy, but this does not mean at all that the assessment of this policy should be based only on the political situation. Moreover, it is the distant prospect that allows a more objective assessment of past events. In addition, one should not break the chain of events, which also distorts their perception. That is why, in our opinion, it is important to consider different aspects of the events on the eve of the Great Patriotic War in



Thus, modern Russian historiography is faced with the task of comprehensively studying the path along which the Soviet Union managed to go from a pariah of the international community to the second superpower of the world. This will allow, on the one hand, to pay tribute to our ancestors, whose sweat and blood this path was watered, and on the other hand, it will give modern Russian society certain guidelines for the future. Of course, the solution of this problem will require long-term efforts and the study of both the development of international relations at various levels and the internal changes in Soviet society. This work was

prepared at the intersection of general civil, military history and historiography of the problems of 1939-1941, which, in the author's opinion, fully corresponds to the concept of a problematic study. At the same time, an attempt to consider different aspects of the history of this period predetermined a certain mosaic nature of the study, which, nevertheless, as the author hopes, will not interfere with a holistic perception of the problems considered in it. Therefore, the form of essays was chosen for the book, each of which is a relatively independent and complete work dedicated to one or another side of the events on the eve and the beginning of World War II. To prepare this study, materials from the now declassified funds of the State Archives of the Russian Federation (GARF), the Russian State Archives of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), the Russian State Military Archives (RGVA), the Russian State Archives of Economics (RGAE), the Russian State Archives of Contemporary History (RGANI), numerous documentary publications, memoirs of participants in the events and dedicated to the period of the 1920-1940s. studies that provided a broader picture of events. At the same time, I would like to warn the reader in advance that since most of the problems touched upon in our study still cause fierce disputes

between historians, for many of them established ideas have been formed in the public mind, including those of a mythical nature, the author had to analyze them in detail with involving a large number of archival documents, figures, facts and taking into account the opinions of other researchers. Therefore, the book can hardly be called "light reading", but thanks to this, the reader gets the opportunity to get acquainted with the current state of knowledge of these problems, new or little-known materials. It is clear that more than one book can be written on the topic of research with a detailed presentation of the various aspects of the events described. Given the need to adhere to a more or less acceptable length, the author refused to describe those plots that are well known not only to specialists, but also to the general public and have already become commonplaces of any more or less popular book on the eve of the war. In this case, a reference to the relevant works usually follows. Unlike some publicists, the author believes that the study of the events of 1939-1941. will require the efforts of more than one generation of historians, and is always open to any constructive discussion.

## **On the way to war**

World War II 1939-1945 became one of the most important events in the history of the 20th century, the impact of which is still being felt. Over the past half century, thanks to the hard work of researchers from different countries, a truly boundless world historiography has emerged, containing an analysis of various aspects and events of the war. Unfortunately, the process of studying the general problems of the genesis, course and outcome of the war was left a certain imprint by the political situation during the Cold War, which makes it difficult to comprehensively analyze the events of the 1930s - the first half of the 1940s, without which their objective study is impossible. Thus, in Soviet historiography, the thesis that the war was a product of capitalism dominated, and in Western literature the concept was formed that the war was a clash of "totalitarianism" and "democracy", although it was contradicted by

the assertion that the USSR was also a totalitarian state. Despite the fact that a discussion continues in the literature regarding the exact definitions of the concepts of "totalitarianism" and "democracy", now this concept has been borrowed by some domestic authors. As a rule, when analyzing the

problems of the genesis of the Second World War, they prefer not to remember that war is one of the methods of relations between states in the international arena, regardless of existing socio-economic relations and political regimes. Consequently, socio-economic and political differences in themselves do not necessarily lead to wars. A much more important role in this case is played by the specific political and economic contradictions of states. The policy of the great powers in the 20-30s. The 20th century, as in any other era, was characterized by constant rivalry and struggle to expand its influence in the international arena. Such a policy is carried out, as a rule, regardless of the existing political regime, and even the influence of the dominant socio-economic relations is generally felt so indirectly that it does not allow drawing such straightforward conclusions. Depending on the object of policy and the general situation, any great power uses a wide range of methods from propaganda and ideological influence to direct military intervention.

An analysis of the situation in the interwar period is impossible without considering some of the general problems of the development of the world economy. The global world economy had developed by the beginning of the 20th century. as a result of supplementing the world market with an international interweaving of loan and entrepreneurial capital, the creation of colonial empires. At the beginning of the XX century. the world economy consisted of the industrial countries of the West and their agricultural and raw material appendages (colonies). The condition for the formation of the world economy was the world market, the formation of which took place especially intensively from the middle of the 19th century, when the development of mass machine production led to the development of the world market into the world economy. Along with the exchange of goods, international production ties have been greatly developed, stimulated by the international migration of capital. The established world economy with the established international division of labor was undermined during the First World War, which led to the reshaping of the world economy. The main role in it passed from England to the United States, the restoration of most of Central and Eastern Europe required huge investments, most of which went to Germany, since only she had a sufficiently developed industrial and financial infrastructure and could recoup the investment. The small states of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe could only offer agricultural products and raw materials to the world market. The development of the world economy in 1918-1939. reflected the struggle between two main trends. One of them is from the 19th century. the tradition of the liberal economic regime, the second - the state-regulated economy that took shape during the First World War. With the end of the war, this seemingly accidental economic policy was abandoned. Among the great powers, the desire to revive the economic regime of the pre-war period prevailed, and in the 1920s. it seemed to mostly succeed. Only the crisis of 1929-1933. completely dispelled those hopes. In order to overcome the crisis, all the great powers, to a greater or lesser extent, used state intervention in the economy. Thus, a trend has finally taken shape aimed at creating a systematically developing modern system of a regulated market economy based on advanced technology and rationalization of production, on strengthening the regulatory role of the state.

The development of the world economy in the interwar years is clearly divided into two large stages: the 1920s and 1930s, which are separated by the global crisis of 1929-1933. In turn, each of these stages is divided into two periods. For the 1920s this is 1918-1923. - including the post-war boom and economic recession - a kind of period of adaptation of the economy to the peace period and 1924-1929. - the period of completion of the post-war

recovery and growth of national and world economies. Anglo-American economic rivalry, during which the United States increasingly attacked the economic positions of England, permeates the entire 1920s. Following the intensive American financial expansion, other great powers in the second half of the 1920s. expanded the export of capital, which led to an increase in private long-term investment from \$41.6 billion in 1913-1914. to 47.5 billion dollars in 1929-1930. Accordingly, the volume of world trade, which decreased from \$64.8 billion in 1913 to \$51.8 billion in 1920, rose to \$83.9 billion in 1929.<sup>16</sup>

Having moved the economic center of the world from the European to the American coast of the Atlantic Ocean, the First World War radically changed the system of the world economy. The United States gained the most from the war, increasing its national wealth by 40%, making it potentially the world's dominant power. Having overcome the post-war economic recession of 1920-1923, the American economy began to gain momentum confidently. Until 1929, the volume of industrial production increased by 26%, amounting to 43.3% of world industrial output. Using its economic power, the United States sought to spread the Monroe Doctrine throughout the world, creating under its auspices, on the basis of an agreement with other industrial countries, an economic empire of "open doors and equal opportunities", which was seen as a panacea for revolution, which should have made it more attractive. for future partners. Thus, the American leadership tried to use economic means to translate the potentially dominant position of the United States on the world stage into real influence.

To limit the economic opportunities of competitors, the United States used the issue of the war debts of the European allies, who received loans for 10.6 billion dollars, most of which fell on England, France and Italy. Naturally, all calls from Paris and London to cancel these debts met with a sharp rebuff from Washington. In 1923, England, and in 1926 France as well, were forced to sign with the United States agreements on the payment of debts, which were the most stringent in terms of the conditions contained in them. At the same time, Italy, whose debt amounted to 2,015 million dollars, had to pay only about 20% of the total amount at the rate of 0.4% per annum. Thus, the problem of war debts became an economic lever to suppress competitors. In seeking economic penetration into Europe, the United States undertook a targeted financial intervention in the conditions of post-war economic chaos and successfully exploited the problem of German reparations. The adoption of the Dawes Plan (1924) and extensive investment in the German economy allowed the United States to take a firm place in the center of Europe, and at the same time create an economic and political counterbalance to the influence of France and England.

The American economy, which experienced in the second half of the 1920s. economic boom, was vitally interested in expanding exports and world trade in general. By the end of the 1920s. The United States managed to significantly oust England in world markets. Thus, the share of American exports to Japan increased from 16.8% in 1914 to 30% in 1927, while the share of England decreased accordingly from 16.8% to 7%. In China, the share of American exports increased from 6% in 1913 to 16.4% in 1926, while that of the British decreased from 16.3% to 10.2%. In Latin America, American exports increased from 24% in 1913 to 38% in 1927, while English exports fell from 25% to 16% respectively. In addition, the US greatly expanded its economic penetration into the British Empire, and by 1929 American exports to Canada rose to 68.6% compared to 15% of English. Throughout the 1920s. The United States confidently attacked British positions in the world economy. After the First

World War, England<sup>18</sup> lost its role as a world economic and financial center and turned from a creditor into a debtor to the United States. Within the British Empire, the economic role of the dominions increased significantly. The end of the war stimulated an economic boom through the transition to the production of civilian products. However, by the end of 1920 there was a recession in the British economy, and in 1921-1923. it existed in times of crisis. By stabilizing the financial system and seeking to revive

faith in the stability of the pound sterling, England was forced to agree to harsh conditions for paying the US war debt. By 1925, England managed to restore the "gold standard", which made it possible to balance the budget, but led to a reduction in social programs and reduced the competitiveness of British exports. By 1928 world trade had exceeded the 1913 level by 24%, while England's foreign trade was still 20% below its pre-war level. Correspondingly, the share of England in world exports fell from 12.9% in 1924 to 10.9% in 1929, as its goods were being replaced by cheaper American ones. 1920s were for the English economy a period of prolonged stagnation, which was explained by its outdated structure. Only in 1929 was the pre-war level of industrial production reached. France<sup>19</sup> managed to complete the recovery period by the mid-1920s, using German

reparations. The restoration of the northeastern departments of the country stimulated an economic boom, and on its basis there was an industrialization of industry, its technical renewal. Having reached the pre-war level in 1924, by 1930 the French economy exceeded it by 40%. However, the share of France in world industrial production fell from 7.2% in 1913 to 7% in 1928. The constant depreciation of the franc until 1926 contributed to the expansion of foreign trade, which increased from 14.9 billion francs in 18 billion francs in 1929. In 1926-1929. France had a deficit-free budget, a stable currency, and introduced the "gold standard" in 1928. At the same time, the French economy was characterized by a relatively low technical level of industry, low labor productivity and a degree of concentration of production. Attempts to expand economic cooperation with Germany in the second half of the 1920s. ran into a number of economic and political obstacles and ended in vain. As a result, although industrial production in France increased from 1920 to 1929 by 77%, its economy lagged far behind the economies of the USA, England and Germany. Defeated in the First World War, Germany<sup>20</sup> found itself in a state of economic collapse. Territorial losses, the transfer of material resources to the winners through reparations, inflation, political instability led to a constant decline in industrial

production. Germany's share in world exports fell from 13% in 1913 to 5.8% in 1924. Germany managed to get rid of 154 billion domestic debt. The absence of a mechanism for paying reparations led to constant crises, which, under pressure from France, were resolved by force. The settlement of the problem of reparations in the Dawes plan (1924) allowed Germany to receive the necessary investments and, on their basis, to modernize the industry. By 1929 Germany's share of world exports had risen to 9.8%. However, bound by reparations and interest on loans, the German economy was doomed to a small share of savings. Until the late 1920s, Germany managed to combine reparations, social payments and an acceptable level of taxes, but this balance was precarious due to a lack of financial reserves. The economic situation in Italy<sup>21</sup>, which almost immediately after the end of the war was engulfed by the crisis of 1919-1923, was difficult. Only in the mid-1920s. Italy's economy entered a period of recovery, which was facilitated by the stabilization of the lira in 1926 with the help of American loans and significant benefits on the terms of the payment of the US war debt. In general, the volume

of industrial production in Italy increased during the years 1924-1929. by 19%, and its share in world industrial output increased from 2.7% in 1913 to 3.3%. In the 1930s the development of the Italian economy was affected by the country's limited raw material reserves, which made it dependent on imports. The economy is characterized by a long stagnation, which has been replaced by a military conjuncture. Growth of industrial production for 1929-1938. amounted to only 10%, and the share of Italy in the total volume of world manufacturing output in the 1930s. decreased somewhat.

Japan<sup>22</sup> used World War I quite successfully for its economic development, increasing its national wealth by 25%. The weakening of great power competition in the Far East allowed Japanese industry to develop through exports, but the restoration of the pre-war situation led to a decline due to the narrowness of the domestic market. In 1920-1923. The Japanese economy was in crisis, complicated by the earthquake in the Tokyo area. Second half of the 1920s characterized by a moderate industrial boom, held back by Japan's narrow resource base. The volume of foreign trade grew slightly, from 1.9 billion yen in 1920 to 2.1 billion yen in 1929. In general, the Japanese economy was still underdeveloped. Although the volume of industrial production increased in 1924-1930. by 28%, in 1930 the light industry produced 61.8% of products, and Japan's share in world production was 2.5%.

After the end of the Civil War, the Soviet leadership<sup>23</sup> faced the urgent task of restoring the economy and normalizing life in the country. The lifting of the economic blockade in January 1920 made it possible to start economic contacts with European countries, but they never became strong, since the political situation affected their development. The impossibility of obtaining investments in the West without paying off pre-revolutionary debts forced the Soviet leadership to accept the idea of self-reliant economic autarky. The new economic policy proclaimed in 1921 made it possible to restore the economy, but posed a number of intractable problems. Central among them was the problem of the balance between the public and private sectors of the economy, which was never found. The application of the principles of the NEP was quite selective, giving rise to the problem of the degree of state management of the economy. The emerging market, due to the above reasons, remained undeveloped and deformed, maintaining a high level of monopolization. The persistence of a high level of scarcity of the commodity market gave rise to periodic crises in 1923, 1925, 1927-1928, the settlement of which by non-economic means, due to the desire to maintain political stability, undermined the development of the market. Being a compromise, the NEP could not but end in a crisis, but it allowed to normalize the economic situation in the country after the Civil War. In general, the restoration of industry dragged on until 1928. The USSR imported industrial equipment through the export of raw materials. The stake on foreign concessions as conductors of the latest technologies did not materialize on the whole, although it did make it possible to obtain some benefits.

The "military alert" of 1927 exposed a number of internal contradictions in Soviet society, showing that a significant part of the population did not support the authorities, panic aggravated the deficit and led to the disruption of grain procurements. The Soviet leadership was convinced that the existing defense industry and the army did not allow for large-scale military operations. Accordingly, a period of systematic preparation of the economy and the army for war began, which, according to the Soviet leadership, was inevitable. But the development of the military-industrial complex and the army required the solution of the peasant question and the achievement of the moral and political unity of society. The low marketability of agriculture stimulated the need for state control over the grain market, which was practically monopolized by him by 1926-1927. The economic backwardness characteristic of pre-revolutionary Russia was not only not eliminated in the 1920s, but, on the contrary, was aggravated, which threatened the fulfillment of the task of returning the USSR to the club of great powers. The Soviet leadership was faced with a dilemma: either the country would again become a great power and increase its influence in the world, which required a radical modernization of the economy, or it would have to be content with the role of a regional power with the prospect of further weakening its influence. The desire to quickly raise the economic level of the country led to the preparation of an economic leap, which was supposed to complete what had been started at the end of the 19th century. creation of an industrial structure of the economy.

The problem of financing modernization was aggravated by the lack of free capital, which required the USSR to receive funds from abroad or find them within the country. Integration into the capitalist economy was completely unacceptable for the Soviet leadership, since it posed the problem of maintaining commanding heights in the economy, and thus the power in the country. There was only one way left - reliance on internal funds, which led to increased traditional state intervention in the economy, which was the only force capable of accumulating financial resources and using them to modernize industry. Convinced at the turn of the 1920s and 1930s that the USSR had no serious problems internationally, the Soviet leadership decided to take a leap. The grain procurement crisis of 1927-1928, which coincided with the preparation of an economic leap, exposed the problem of the relationship between the further development of agriculture while maintaining the NEP principles and industrialization. The implementation of accelerated industrialization depended on a stable supply of food to the population, which required a state monopoly not only in the grain market, which turned out to be clearly insufficient, but also in all agriculture. The collectivization that began in 1929, which sharply raised the marketability of agriculture by lowering the standard of living in the countryside, was called upon to solve this problem.

During the First Five-Year Plan, which began at the same time, the shortage of financial resources stimulated the reduction of non-productive costs, non-economic coercion and shock work, which was supposed to make it possible to overcome the first phase of industrialization. Under these conditions, the Soviet leadership made a bet on the accelerated development of advanced branches of heavy industry, which could become the basis for the industrialization of other sectors of the economy. World economic crisis 1929-1933 skillfully used by the USSR for the purchase of equipment and technology abroad. During the years of the First Five-Year Plan, about 95% of Soviet industrial enterprises received Western assistance in the form of equipment, technology or technical assistance. Cooperation with Western firms and the use of cheap labor from the Soviet population made it possible to lay the foundation for modern heavy industry. At the same time, a crisis was growing in agriculture, which led in 1932-1933. to famine in the countryside. Extensive development during the period of laying the foundations of modern industry during the years of the First Five-Year Plan was replaced in the Second Five-Year Plan by more systematic industrial construction, intensive development of production capacities and an increase in production. At the same time, the Soviet military-industrial complex developed at an accelerated pace, the total increase in production of which increased during 1933-1937. by 286% compared to the total industrial growth of 120%.

Between 1928 and 1940 The USSR was radically transformed and became a powerful military-economic great power, a modern heavy industry was created, new economic centers were laid. The creation of modern industry made it possible to slightly raise the living standards of the population and reduce the purchase of equipment abroad. Now only the latest models of equipment and technology were purchased, which led to a reduction in the country's foreign trade turnover. If in 1913 the share of Russia in world trade was 3.9%, then in 1929 the USSR accounted for only 1.3%, in 1936 - 1.24% and in 1938 - 1.1%. This significantly reduced the country's use of the international division of labor. The country reached a high level of economic autarchy, which, along with the stability of the political regime, made it possible to purposefully prepare for the struggle for strengthening Soviet influence in the world. "The unity of the nation was strengthened before the war by all possible (and impossible) means and was stronger than ever, while the whole world, misled by the purges and repressions of 1936-1938, believed that the USSR was on the verge of collapse. Only 22 June 1941, when Hitler attacked Russia, the real power of this country was revealed to the world.

World crisis 1929-1933 dealt a heavy blow to the global economy. World industrial production decreased by 37%, the capacity of the world market decreased. The financial crisis led to a sharp decline in capital exports, which fell from 2.8

billion dollars in 1928 to 344 million dollars in 1932 and up to 311 million dollars in 1936. in index terms, the export of capital decreased from 100 in 1925-1928. to 12 in 1932 and 10 in 1934. Accordingly, the total amount of private long-term investment decreased from \$47.5 billion in 1929-1930 to 31.1 billion dollars in 1938. It turned out to be destroyed credit sector: during the crisis, 25 countries stopped payments for a total of 6.3 billion dollars. The world currency crisis led to the collapse of the "gold standard" system and folding currency blocs, which was an attempt to protect against the devaluation of currencies. The desire of the leading countries to protect their economies with high customs barriers in combined with the above problems led to the growth of autarkic tendencies and the formation of trade blocs, which stimulated the atomization of the world market, strengthened bilateral trade to the detriment of multilateral. The desire of the great powers to overcome the crisis and its consequences on the ways of expanding exports increased the growth of competition, government support for exporters and protectionism. As a result, relatively unified world economy of the 20s. found itself in a crisis and began to disintegrate into local economic systems, undermining global stability<sup>25</sup>

The crisis hit the American economy hardest . Trying to overcome crisis, the American leadership introduced high customs duties on imports in 1930, triggering retaliatory measures that hit US exports. In terms of currency crisis most of the American investment in Europe, Canada and Australia depreciated, and the abolition of debt payments from 1932-1933. further reduced overseas investment. In an attempt to put pressure on defaulting debtors, the US In 1934, a law was passed refusing credit to these countries, which further limited opportunities to export capital. As a result, the volume of foreign trade decreased by 3.1 times, and the US share in world trade fell from 13.8% in 1929 to 10.8% in 1932. During 1930-x years. The United States used all means to overcome foreign customs barriers. TO In 1937, they managed to slightly increase their share in world trade to 11.7%, but already in In 1938, it again decreased to 10.7%. In the 1930s reduction in the volume of foreign trade The US was more significant than England. Table

1 Foreign  
trade index<sup>27</sup>

One of the most tempting markets for the United States was the British Empire, became in the 1920s. an object of American economic penetration. However, the crisis 1929-1933 changed the situation. England created an imperial system of preferences. Accordingly, American exports to the empire fell from 100 in 1929 to 26 in 1932. and rose only to 66.9 in 1937. At the same time, for England, the reduction in exports to the empire was less significant: from 100 in 1929 to 50.9 in 1932 and 76.9 in 1937. Private American investment in empires declined from \$5,164.3 million in 1930 to \$4,165.8 million dollars in 1938, and the British increased from 2,187 million pounds to 2,318 million pounds sterling (nearly \$11,590 million). Place of Anglo-American trading Latin America also remained a rivalry. During the crisis, England managed to improve their positions there. Its share in foreign trade of 20 Latin American countries has grown. In the 1930s Germany also became a commercial competitor of the USA. From 1929 to 1938 US exports to Germany fell from \$401 million to \$104 million The US has been squeezed out of the markets of Southeast Europe.

Table 2 Share of countries in foreign trade of Latin America (%)<sup>28</sup>

The 1933 International Economic Conference in London failed because of the US position on customs tariffs and the devaluation of the dollar. Within the framework of the "new course", state regulation of the economy was introduced, which made it possible to turn the crisis into stagnation, which lasted until 1936 and was replaced by a new recession in 1937-1938. Despite government support, the American economy flourished in the first half of the 1930s. very slow pace. It was only in 1937 that US industry surpassed the level of 1929, but already in the second half of the year a new recession began to appear. The recovery of industry was slower in the USA than in England, and their share in world industrial production decreased accordingly. The confident US offensive against the economic positions of England, which had been successfully continuing throughout the 1920s, was interrupted by the global crisis of the early 1930s.

The British economy<sup>29</sup> felt the impact of the crisis from the beginning of 1930. The relatively shallow recession in production placed England in a better position than the United States. In 1931, England abandoned the "gold standard" and devalued the pound sterling, which caused the price of British exports to drop, making them more competitive than American ones. To combat American trade competition, the Sterling bloc was created in 1931, and imperial preferences were introduced in 1932. All this allowed England to again take first place in world trade, increasing its share from 13.05% in 1929 to 13.24% in 1932, while the share of the USA decreased from 13.84% in 1929 to 10.8%. In the conditions of the currency crisis, England was able to maintain relatively high rates in the export of capital. So, in 1932-1938. The United States exported 191.2 million dollars, and England 1 billion dollars. The struggle between the devalued pound sterling and the dollar was carried on with varying success until 1936, when the USA, Britain and France agreed on financial stabilization at the achieved level. During this time, England has significantly improved its position. Already in 1934, British industry was able to

surpass the pre-crisis level of 1929, and the mid-1930s. became a period of economic growth for England. The re-equipment of the British armed forces, which began in 1934, and the growth of military spending stimulated industrial production. Having pressed American goods on the world markets, England faced a new competitor - Germany, the economic rivalry with which also took on a global character. In 1937, the share of world exports of finished goods was 20.8% for England, 20.8% for Germany, 18.2% for the USA, and 6.7% for Japan. Thanks to the higher rates of industrial development, by 1938 Germany overtook England in terms of the share of exports of machinery - 24% to 23%, respectively. By the end of the 1930s. changed the position of England in European markets. Germany began to dominate the markets of the countries of South-Eastern Europe, which, due to their predominantly agrarian development, were tied to the German market for industrial products. For England, bound by imperial preferences, the development of trade with these countries turned out to be difficult. Tough Anglo-German trade rivalry was also going on in Latin America. The economic expansion of Germany revived the traditional Anglo-German contradictions, which London sought to overcome on the basis of a global agreement with Berlin. The impact of the crisis, which had an effect only in 1931, on the economy of France<sup>30</sup> was, in

contrast to other great powers, longer. The prolonged stagnation that hit the French economy in the 1930s caused France's share of world industrial production to fall from 7% in 1928 to 5.1% in 1937. industrial production in France was at a level below the pre-war level of 1913, which, in the context of the agrarian crisis, significantly increased social conflict in society. In the context of the crisis, France also introduced



protectionist tariffs. Foreign trade fell from 18 billion francs in 1929 to 10.4 billion francs in 1936 and increased only slightly in 1938, to 14.1 billion francs, due to increased trade with the colonies. Accordingly, the share of France in world trade also decreased - from 7.7% in 1913 to 5.1% in 1937. In the context of the devaluation of the dollar and the pound sterling, the franc was also devalued in 1936. This provoked a sharp rise in prices and led to the fact that from May 5, 1938, the franc became a monetary unit pegged to the pound sterling. Such a difficult state of the French economy was affected by the narrowness of the raw material base, the fall in foreign trade. Outdated equipment and the narrowness of the domestic market led to the introduction of protectionism, which further reduced the connection of the French economy with the world market. France's political ambitions after the First World War led to the spending of significant financial resources for illusory purposes, which contributed to the undermining of the monetary system and the growth of public debt. what was connected with the world crisis

manifested itself very strongly in Germany<sup>31</sup>, with reparation obligations of 1929-1933. and the presence in the German economy of too large a share of foreign investment. The withdrawal of foreign funds during the crisis led to the collapse of the financial foundation of the German economy. The economic crisis in Germany led to an acute political crisis, the way out of which was found in the transfer of power to the NSDAP. Accordingly, state intervention in the economy sharply increased on the basis of stimulating heavy industry and militarization. Investments in light industry increased from 1933 to 1935 only 1.7 times, while in heavy industry - 4 times. This quickly affected the development of the economy, allowing Germany to increase economic expansion in world markets. The purpose of German foreign trade, also completely controlled by the state, was to provide the country with strategic raw materials. In foreign trade with the countries of Southeastern Europe, Germany made extensive use of clearing, which allowed her, having a passive trade balance, to constantly expand her imports of raw materials and foodstuffs from the Balkans. By the end of the 1930s. Germany became the dominant force in the markets of South-East Europe, displacing England and the USA from there. In the 1930s Germany has also been successful in Latin American markets using the same clearing system. In the export of finished products, especially machines, Germany managed to infiltrate the markets of the British Empire, taking advantage of the relative cheapness of its goods compared to English ones.

Back in 1929-1932. Germany achieved a reduction in the volume, and then the complete abolition of reparations. However, by February 28, 1933, Germany's external debt amounted to 23.3 billion marks. The German leadership, on the basis of an agreement with large creditors, was able to restructure its debts. During 1934, the German debt was reduced by 97%, saving Germany 1,043 million marks this year alone. Even American banks, to which Germany owed \$1,788 million, agreed to make concessions, since they received almost \$13 billion from the Dawes and Young bonds alone. Moreover, Germany guaranteed repayments on these loans. England, to which Germany owed 132 million pounds (1,718 million marks) on September 30, 1933, entered into an agreement on the non-claim of loans, which prompted a similar decision and the small countries of Europe. Despite the German machinations with the payment of debts under the Dawes and Young plans, neither the United States nor England applied sanctions, fearing the collapse of the Nazi regime and the Bolshevization of Germany. Becoming in the 1930s. the largest market for raw

materials and war materials, Germany secured a relatively favorable position in trade with Britain and the United States, who feared that restrictions on such transactions could lead to an increase in German exports and increase competition. Moreover, by 1935 Germany had become the largest importer of raw materials and military materials from the USA and England. The re-export of strategic raw materials by England to Germany gave her significant profits and at the same time limited German penetration into the British Empire. Accordingly, the share of raw materials in German imports increased from 53.6% in 1929 to 61.4% in 1935.

d. Skillfully using Anglo-American competition, Germany constantly purchased from England and the USA the latest military technological developments and licenses for the production of necessary military equipment. The arms race, which was gaining momentum more and more clearly in the second half of the 1930s, stimulated production and brought large profits to international cartels, which were actively used by Germany to receive additional financial resources as bonuses for not using export quotas, which was the result of the militarization of the economy. Under the cover of the need to pay

the remaining debts, Germany gradually expanded its export operations. Anglo-German trade was carried out on the basis of mutual concessions, which led to the penetration of Germany into the English market. The share of England in German exports increased from 7.4% in 1929 to 9.5% in 1937. accounts at the Reichsbank. From October 1, 1934 to March 31, 1939, Germany received 55.5 million pounds sterling from machinations in trade with England, of which about 20 million went to pay debts, and the rest to develop German foreign trade.

State incentives very soon affected the pace of economic development in Germany. The total volume of production of means of production in Germany in 1938 amounted to 37.5 billion marks, while in England - 25.4 billion marks, in France - 10.9 billion marks. In 1939, Germany accounted for 43% of the total arms production in Germany, the USA, England, the USSR, Italy and Japan. Germany's food security also increased from 65% in 1927 to 83% in 1939. Germany's share in world industrial production increased from 8.3% in 1932 to 13.3% in 1939 (within the 1937 borders). .), or 15% with occupied territories. Accordingly, Germany and its economically connected countries formed a third trading bloc based on clearing and bilateral financial relations. In 1938, Germany firmly took third place in world foreign trade turnover, in which it accounted for 9.4%. Attempts by the United States and Britain to negotiate separately with Germany on the division of markets and the coordination of economic policy did not produce results, since in the conditions of Anglo-American rivalry the German leadership skillfully used it to achieve its own goals.

The state of the Japanese economy<sup>32</sup> by the beginning of the global crisis was characterized by the predominance of light industry and agricultural production. 1930s became a period of industrialization of Japan and the creation of a modern industry for that time, the development of which was based on the military situation and the use of China's raw materials. Already in 1937, heavy industry provided 57.8% of industrial output. Foreign trade turnover increased from 2.3 billion yen in 1931 to 7.1 billion yen in 1940. During the 1930s. in Japan, state regulation of the economy was significantly strengthened, culminating in the adoption in 1938 of a law on the control of industry. Trying to solve the problem of supplying industry with raw materials, the Japanese leadership tightened control over foreign exchange transactions and foreign trade, whose share in the world increased from 2.9% in 1929 to 3.7% in 1937. Japan had a rather limited financial market, so it was public financing of the economy is widespread. The military situation had a significant impact on economic development.

US-Japanese economic ties helped modernize Japanese industry and made Japan one of the most profitable markets for US exporters in the Far East. In addition, the modernization of the Japanese economy led to increased Japanese-British competition in Asia, which was also beneficial to the United States. The general archaism of social relations in Japan contributed to the extraction of high profits by the largest Japanese industrial groups and their American partners. In the 1930s Japan began to oust British light industrial products from Asian markets. Using its geographical and military position,

Japan increased the penetration of capital into China. If in 1931 the share of Japan in foreign investments in China was 35.1%, second only to England, then in 1937 it increased to 41.8%. However, despite the significant changes that occurred in Japanese industry in the 1930s, Japan failed to significantly increase its share in the world's manufacturing output. The development of the world economy in the interwar

twenty years, as already noted, went through two main stages. In the 1920s in general, there was a fairly stable system of the world economy, which contributed to the preservation of the post-war economic status quo. Crisis of 1929-1933 changed the economic situation. The unified world economic system turned out to be split into a number of local economic systems, which led to a sharp increase in competition between the great powers. In the 1930s a clear process of redistributing the economic roles of the great powers in the world economy and changing the economic picture of the world began. The United States and Britain continued to compete for first place in the economic hierarchy of the great powers. Germany became the third world power, the importance of France declined, and Italy generally retained its position. The USSR and Japan became the new industrial powers. If achieved by the end of the 1930s. labor productivity in England and Germany is taken as one, then in the USA it was one and a half times higher, in France it was one and a half times lower, in Italy two times, in the USSR three times, in Japan six times.

Anglo-American economic rivalry had become so commonplace during the 1920s that the economic rise of Germany was not at first perceived as a serious threat by the parties. It is no coincidence that both Britain and the United States contributed to the development of the German economy, hoping to use it to put pressure on the rival. Using the Anglo-American contradictions, Germany was able not only to significantly strengthen its economy, but also to pursue an independent policy. As a result, a system of tripartite economic rivalry between England, the USA and Germany was formed, which allowed all its participants to play on the contradictions of their rivals. True, the position of the three economically leading great powers was different. Thus, the US economy, with all the complexities of a protracted depression, still had significant potential reserves and was interested in consolidating the world economy, where it could play a key role. The economy of England was able to overcome the consequences of the crisis by strengthening the economic isolation of the British Empire, but had limited resources to maintain its economic position within the framework of an open world economy. Germany, which managed to mobilize its economy and become the world's third economic power thanks to strict state control, did not have significant resources for a long-term economic struggle at all. Therefore, the economic expansion of Germany was accompanied by the use of a hidden, and later open, military-political threat. England sought not only to use German-American competition in its own interests, but also to achieve a

comprehensive settlement of relations with Berlin, creating a kind of European political and economic bloc directed against the USA and the USSR. In the mid 1930s. The US also realized the need for some kind of agreement with Germany. At the end of 1936, Washington proposed the creation of a European consortium to exploit the Congo Basin and provide funds to stabilize the German economy, which in response would stop the policy of armament and autarky. As a result of the implementation of this plan, international trade would receive a significant impetus, the United States would be able to increase its economic expansion in Europe and Africa. Naturally, Britain contributed in every possible way to the disruption of this plan, and from the beginning of 1937 intensified its policy of appeasing Germany, hoping to reach its own economic agreement with it. In 1937, the United States proposed to hold a conference to work out measures to ensure equal access to raw materials in the spirit of the "open door" policy, which, of course, caused a negative reaction from England, which was

owner of a large part of these resources. In response, the United States and Germany held November 1937 negotiations in San Francisco on the division of world markets, but under conditions economic recession in the US and more than generous British proposals for redrawing borders in Europe, Germany has evaded any specific agreements<sup>34</sup>. In an

effort to use Germany against the United States, England did not at all intend to worsen their relationship with Washington, realizing the need to counterbalance Berlin, which by all means delayed the conclusion of an agreement with London. Continuing to seek agreements with Germany, England November 17, 1938 concluded a trade agreement with the United States, by granting them the most favored nation treatment, which opened up for the American economy is the door to the British Empire. However, contacts with Germany were not interrupted and On March 14-16, 1939, an Anglo-German cartel was concluded in Düsseldorf an agreement that made it possible to change the cartel structure of the world in favor of Anglo-German monopolies, and the refusal of the United States to join it could cause joint retaliatory actions of England and Germany. On March 11, 1939, France also proposed Germany to conclude an extensive economic agreement. All this could not but cause violent discontent in the United States, which, in the face of the threat of economic consolidation Europe was greeted with relief by the beginning of the pre-war political crisis, meant to undermine this dangerous trend for them, which contributed to the preservation the split of Europe and the outbreak of war<sup>35</sup>.

Other great powers did not have the opportunity to join the global economic struggle, but often became competitors of the leading economic powers at the regional level. Japan quite successfully played this role in the Far East. East, Italy - in the Balkans and East Africa, France - in Europe and own colonies. Only the USSR did not participate in this economic struggle, although it used its foreign trade relations to strengthen its influence. The collapse of the world economy into local economic systems not only exacerbated the mutual competition of the great powers, but also contributed to the intensification of the arms race, which was seen as means of stimulating economic recovery. In 1938, Germany's military spending, Italy and Japan amounted to 1,905 million pounds, England, France and the USA - 829 million pounds, the USSR - 924 million pounds sterling<sup>36</sup>. It is clear that the militarization of economies Germany and the USSR and the development of the Japanese economy in a military environment had decisive influence on their structure. Lacking opportunities for economic confrontation on the world stage, these countries purposefully created a military-industrial complex, preparing for war, which reflected their economic weakness, forcing to put in the first place preparation for activities during wartime, when war itself is seen as a necessary condition for changing one's place in the

world. Table

3 Military expenditures of the great powers of Europe

(million dollars)<sup>37</sup> Year Germany England France

Italy Total 1932 253.5 (17.3%) 426.1 (29.2%) 509.2 (34.9%) 270.6 ( 18.6%) 1459.4

(100%) 1936 3600.0 (58.1%) 846.9 (13.7%) 834.4 (13.4%) 916.1 (14.8%) 6197.4

(100%) 1939 4500.1 (50.1%) 1817.0 (20.2%) 1800.2 (20%) 873.4 (9.7%) 8990, 7

(100%) Economic rivalry in the triangle England - USA - Germany overlapped

on the political confrontation of the great powers in the international arena, which led to mutual stimulation of those and other contradictions. The

Versailles-Washington system was a form of political organization of international relations after the war of 1914-1918. and was enshrined in treaties and agreements of 1919-1922. As usual, the basis of the system international relations, the most important internal factor in its development was the balance forces, understood as a specific historical ratio of specific weight and influence

the states included in the system, and first of all the great powers, which in fact were the main system-forming elements. Of course, medium and small states also influenced the overall balance of power in the system of international relations, but mainly at the regional level. The existence of any system, including the Versailles-Washington system, continues as long as the correlation (balance) of forces between individual countries enshrined in it corresponds to the realities of the process of historical development of states. A certain stability inherent in the system of international relations depends on the degree of its equilibrium, which is a special case of the balance of power, in which it corresponds at least to the balance of the main interests of the great powers<sup>38</sup>. However, due to the internal development of the great powers, "the interests of one or more countries begin to go beyond the

existing balance of power, as a result of which the stability of the system is violated. If it is not possible to modify the system and reach a new consensus, the system collapses. The transition from one system to the other, as a rule, is accompanied by wars. The relationship of states within the system of international relations is determined primarily by their attitude to the existing balance. Some seek to consolidate it, others to transformation, and others to destruction. Depending on this, states build their relations with each other. with each other as allies, partners or as adversaries. Countries striving to maintain the balance of the system are called balance states. They act as guarantors of the preservation of the system of international relations, its adaptation to new historical realities"<sup>39</sup>.

The formation of a new world order in Europe after the First World War was complicated by the revolution in Russia and the chaos in Eastern Europe. The development of the Versailles Treaty was carried out only by the winners, who often pursued various goals. For France, the main thing was the maximum weakening of Germany, which made it possible to consolidate French hegemony in Europe and secure its eastern borders. England and the USA were more interested in maintaining the European balance. For this, it was necessary to take into account the interests of Germany to a greater extent, which, in the conditions of the collapse of Austria-Hungary, the revolution in Russia, the general national revolutionary upsurge and effective Bolshevik propaganda, could be used as a stabilizing factor in Central and Eastern Europe. As a result, the Versailles agreements were a compromise between these extreme positions at the expense of the vanquished, which predetermined the revolutionary upsurge in Hungary, the formation of mass communist parties and the revanchist vector of German foreign policy. England and France tried to use the new states that had arisen in Europe both against the Bolshevik revolution and against German revanchism. However, the role of the allies of London and Paris was never too high and tended to

decrease.

The coordinated position of England, France and the USA could become a guarantee of the strength of the Versailles system. However, for a number of reasons the United States withdrew itself from the political problems of Europe, while England and France saw the prospect of European equilibrium differently. Germany, which became the object of the Treaty of Versailles, and the USSR, which was generally outside the framework of the new system of international relations, quite naturally became its opponents. Thus, the Versailles system remained non-equilibrium and non-universal, and its relatively high degree of conflict, despite the widespread propaganda of pacifism, was predetermined by the preservation of the division of the political map of Europe into winners and losers.

The settlement of international relations in the Asia-Pacific region took place in a more relaxed atmosphere. During the conference in Washington (November 12, 1921-February 6, 1922), a new alignment of forces in the Far East was established, which was based on the partnership of the great powers on the basis of a consensus on naval

problems, mutual guarantees of regional interests and general principles of policy in China. The equilibrium of the system was strengthened by the new role of Japan, which, although it was forced to abandon its alliance with England and limit its claims in China and Russia, received guarantees of naval security. Thus, Japan found itself in the role of the main guarantor of the Washington system of international relations. However, only the Far Eastern powers in cooperation with the United States and Britain could be guarantors against Japanese expansionism, but they (the USSR and China) were either excluded from the system of international relations or were its object. Therefore, being a more balanced system than Versailles, it remained non-universal, since it excluded the USSR and China from its subjects.

Within the framework of the Versailles-Washington system of international relations, all the great powers pursued their own goals, ranging from a complete change in the world order to its significant transformation. The main goal of

England was to preserve the role of the political center of the world and the supreme arbiter in European affairs, which required, first of all, the restoration of the "balance of power" in Europe. A European balance under indirect British control would have enabled Britain to more actively resist the two main threats to its position in the world that came from the USSR and the USA. The creation of a "balance of power" in Europe required Britain to weaken the dominant influence of France by strengthening the position of Germany, which led to concessions to Berlin. England was also pushed towards the consolidation of Europe by centrifugal tendencies, more and more clearly felt in the British Empire. The preservation of England's position in the world in the face of a change in the balance of power of the great powers required control over the process of modernization of the Versailles-Washington system. The reflection of this policy was "appeasement", which was reduced to a revision of the existing world order under the control of England. By the end of the 1930s. In addition to the two already traditional threats to British interests from the USSR and the USA, a threat from Germany was added, which confronted England with the problem of choosing a future partner and

The main goal of France was to preserve the won positions on the basis of the creation of a pan-European security system, which met with resistance from the other great powers. France's concessions on the issue of reparations and Germany's equal rights in armaments (1932) and the signing of the Pact of the Four (1933) led to a weakening of its influence in Europe. Negotiations on the Eastern Pact with the aim of creating a pan-European security system ran into the unwillingness of other great powers and a number of French allies to cooperate with the USSR. Under these conditions, the treaty with the USSR became for the French leadership a means of putting pressure on England and Germany. Crisis of 1935-1938 further weakened the position of France in Europe and tied her foreign policy to the position of England, which was seen as a natural ally against Germany.

During the 1920s Italy continued the foreign policy tradition of an alliance with England to strengthen its influence in the Balkans. But the real strengthening of Italy's position in the Eastern Mediterranean led from 1928 to a cooling of Italian-British relations. In the 1930s the strengthening of Germany increased the interest of England and France in cooperation with Italy, which allowed the latter to obtain a number of concessions from them in Africa. During the crisis of 1935-1938. Italy began rapprochement with Germany, basing its foreign policy on balancing between Germany, England and France in order to expand its influence in the Mediterranean, which was quite compatible with the transformation of the existing system of international relations. The main

foreign policy goal of Japan was to expand the zone of influence in the Far East. Under the conditions of the civil war in China, the active Soviet penetration into Xinjiang, Mongolia and Northern Manchuria, the Soviet-Chinese conflict and the Anglo-American rivalry, Japan relied on the military-political solution of the Far Eastern problems. The use of inter-imperialist contradictions in the region, anti-Bolshevik and anti-colonial propaganda, gaining

Allies in Europe allowed Japan to pursue an expansionist course and maintain acceptable relations with other participants in the struggle for influence in the region. In general, the Japanese desire to increase its influence was limited to the Far East and was quite compatible with the transformation of the existing system of international relations.

For Germany, the main foreign policy goal was the revision of the Treaty of Versailles, and in the future, a global change in the existing system of international relations. Using the contradictions between the other great powers, by the end of 1932 Germany managed to eliminate the most severe consequences of the defeat in the First World War. The new German leadership successfully continued this political line, adopting the "policy of a fait accompli." Crisis of 1935-1938 strengthened the position of Germany, which found allies and new opportunities for pressure on England and France. Using the policy of "appeasement", its achievements in the economy, military construction, the ideas of anti-Bolshevism, pacifism and nationalism, Germany was able from the beginning of 1938 to proceed to the revision of the territorial provisions of the Treaty of Versailles. As a result, by the end of the 30s. Germany has significantly increased its military-economic potential and influence in the international arena.

During the years of the revolution and the Civil War, the Soviet Union lost the positions won by the Russian Empire in the international arena and territories in Eastern Europe. In terms of its influence in Europe, the country was thrown back 200 years into the past. It is no coincidence that the Soviet leadership adopted the concept of "world revolution", which combined a new ideology and the traditional tasks of foreign policy to strengthen the country's influence in the world. The strategic goal of the country's foreign policy was the global reorganization of the system of international relations, which made England, France and their allies the main opponents. Having staked on the inevitability of the emergence of a new inter-imperialist conflict, the USSR sought to prevent the consolidation of the great powers, rightly perceiving this as the main threat to its interests. The Soviet leadership skillfully used official diplomatic channels, the illegal possibilities of the Comintern, social propaganda, pacifist ideas, anti-fascism, assistance to some victims of the aggressors to create the image of the main fighter for peace and social progress. The basis of the foreign policy of the United States was the desire to take

the position of the political center of the world instead of England, which required a complete reorganization of the system of international relations based on the creation of a global balance of power of the great powers under the auspices of Washington. Having adopted the policy of "isolationism", the United States made economic expansion the basis of its foreign policy, and economic rivalry with Britain led the United States to support Germany and Japan, whose economic strengthening was supposed to complicate the position of London and push it to make concessions to Washington. In the 1930s in the presence of complex internal problems, the United States successfully used the traditions of the British policy of "brilliant isolation"

XIX century, which allowed them to maintain a free hand, waiting for developments.

Accordingly, in relation to the countries of Latin America since the late 1920s. the policy of "good neighbor" begins to be pursued, in the Far East - the policy of "non-recognition", and in Europe - the policy of "neutrality". The greatest danger to the United States was the British policy of "appeasement", the implementation of which would lead to the preservation of the foundations of the existing system of international relations. Whereas the disruption of this policy and the escalation of the crisis favored American foreign

policy goals. Speaking about the development of the Versailles-Washington system in the interwar twenty years, one should note the presence of global contradictions that had a primary impact on the policy of the great powers. The formation of the post-war system of international relations took place without taking into account the interests of Germany and the USSR, which made them its opponents, and a political triangle developed in Europe (England and France - Germany - the USSR), the participants of which sought to achieve their foreign

goals, playing on the contradictions of rivals. Fearing a Soviet-German rapprochement, England and France in the mid-1920s. made concessions to Germany, which led to some smoothing of contradictions in Europe. However, the problem of the USSR, which sought to regain the role of a great power, remained unresolved, and in the 1920s. The main world contradiction was the contradiction external to the system of international relations between the USSR and the world order, which basically suited all the other great powers.

In the 1930s the change in the balance of power of the great powers led to the fact that a number of powers made an open bet on the violent transformation of the Versailles-Washington system, the principles of which ceased to meet their interests. The peripheral position of these countries in the system of international relations allowed them to use the main contradiction to improve their positions. To this should be added the general growth of regionalism, the desire of all the great powers to use the difficulties of rivals to improve their own positions. This marked an internal crisis in the system of international relations, which could not be eliminated without achieving a new balance of forces and interests. However, there were no sufficiently convincing incentives to achieve it. The crisis of the world economy coincided with the crisis of the Versailles-Washington system, and all the great powers, to one degree or another, embarked on the path of an arms race, preparing for a new struggle for the redivision of the world. It's just that some relied on brute force, while others relied on using the situation to their advantage. Thus, in the 1930s. the external contradiction (USSR - Versailles-Washington system) was supplemented by an internal one, which resulted in a crisis and collapse of the system of international relations. As a result, the political organization of the world

after the First World War was too vulnerable due to the inherent flaws of the Versailles-Washington system. The collapse of the interwar system of international relations went through several stages. In the 1920s, two major crises of the Versailles-Washington system can be distinguished, which led to its modernization in Europe (1923-1925) and a change in the balance of power in the Far East (1925-1929). In the 1930s, the crisis of 1931-1933. marked the beginning of a violent transformation of the system of international relations, and during the crisis of 1935-1938. marked its collapse. The first external crisis of the Versailles-Washington system was the events

of 1923-1925<sup>40</sup> in Europe and the Middle East connected with the establishment of the Versailles system. By the autumn of 1922, it became clear that Turkey, relying on Soviet support, had defended its independence and the Treaty of Sevres required a radical revision. A new agreement was developed during the Lausanne Conference (November 20, 1922-July 24, 1923), at which, in addition to the Turkish problem proper, the question of the regime of the Black Sea straits was discussed. The struggle between England and the USSR on the issue of the straits led to an aggravation of their relations, and, fearing a Soviet-Turkish alliance, the creators of the Versailles system made concessions to Turkey, which received modern borders, and the issues of the regime of the straits were resolved without taking into account Soviet interests. On December 17, 1925, the USSR concluded an agreement of friendship and neutrality with Turkey, guaranteeing the security of its southern borders, and on June 5, 1926, the Turkish-Iraqi border was finally established.

Meanwhile, numerous frictions between Germany and its victors over reparation payments and full implementation of the Treaty of Versailles eventually escalated into an acute crisis. Germany's attempt to achieve a five-year moratorium on the payment of reparations and to obtain investment for economic recovery did not meet with support in the West. This led to Germany's refusal to pay the next reparation contribution. In response, France and Belgium occupied the Ruhr on January 11, 1923, and the German leadership proclaimed a policy of "passive resistance." Germany was engulfed in an acute crisis, separatist, nationalist and social movements revived. England's proposal to work out an effective mechanism for levying



reparations with financial assistance to the restoration of the German economy raised objections from France, and attempts by the German leadership to involve the United States in solving these problems were unsuccessful. The USSR condemned the imperialist robbery of France and decided to use the situation in Germany to prepare a revolutionary coup by the forces of the German Communist Party (KPD).

The KKE launched active propaganda, forcing other workers' organizations to follow it for fear of losing influence among the masses. This revived the separatist sentiments of the local elites, who were afraid of revolution and political chaos. In the context of the growing political crisis, on September 27, 1923, a state of emergency was introduced in Germany and the policy of "passive resistance" was announced to be abandoned. Relying on the Reichswehr, the German leadership began to restore order. On October 11-16, in violation of the constitution, the workers' governments of Saxony and Thuringia were eliminated. The KKE did not dare to aggravate the situation, and the "German October" did not take place. Only in Hamburg, where they did not have time to inform about the cancellation of the performance, on October 23-25 there were street clashes between workers and the troops and police. In western Germany, on October 21, with the tacit support of France, the Republic of the Rhine was proclaimed, but this ephemeral political formation never became a reality. In Bavaria, separatist sentiment faded amid the NSDAP putsch on November 8-9, which was the last major clash between the authorities and political movements in Germany. At the beginning of 1924, the political situation in the country returned to normal, and on February 28 the state of emergency was lifted.

The aggravation of the political situation in Germany influenced the position of Britain and the United States, which became more resolute in favor of a compromise solution to the problem of reparations. In November 1923, a commission of experts began working to develop a plan for an economic agreement and Germany received the first Anglo-American loans, and in December 1923 an American-German trade agreement was signed. Thus, the United States began to actively penetrate the German market, and France, finding itself in political isolation and faced with a number of economic difficulties, made concessions. At the London Conference (July 16 - August 16, 1924), the Dawes Plan was adopted, which entered into force on September 1, 1924. As early as December 1922, Germany offered to guarantee its western borders, and from September 1924 began to demand a place in Council of the League of Nations. The negotiations on these issues that began in December 1924 ended with the development during the conference on October 5-16, 1925 and the signing of the Locarno agreements on December 1. The inclusion of Germany in the Council of the League of Nations, postponed until September 1926, gave Berlin an

excuse to conclude on April 24, 1926 a treaty of neutrality with the USSR. As a result, the Versailles system was modernized taking into account the real situation in the Middle East and Europe. Germany managed to use the contradictions both between the Western great powers and between the West and the USSR to start a revision of the Treaty of Versailles and integrate into the existing system of international relations, which did not interfere with the development of secret military cooperation with Moscow. England managed to regain the role of a pan-European arbiter, limit the claims of France and strengthen its position in relation to the United States. France, having lost the possibility of unilateral sanctions, was forced to limit its claims to Germany, its Eastern European allies did not receive guarantees of their borders, which somewhat weakened French influence in the region. The Soviet leadership failed to arrange a revolutionary coup in Germany, and fears regarding the consolidation of Europe on an anti-Soviet basis were somewhat mitigated by the diplomatic recognition of the USSR by England, Italy and France and the conclusion of an agreement in 1926, which was considered as a guarantee of Germany's non-participation in possible anti-Soviet actions England and France. The US has expanded its economic presence in the center of Europe, gaining new leverage. Italy, minimally affected by the crisis, was able to maintain its possessions in the Aegean Sea and, thanks to the conflict with Greece in Aug

problems in relations with Yugoslavia. Events 1923-1925 demonstrated the low effectiveness of the League of Nations as an international body and its dependence on the policies of the great powers.

The second external crisis of the Versailles-Washington system was the events of 1925-1929 in China, which was a traditional object of exploitation by the great powers. Although formally, according to the agreement of 9 powers, the spheres of influence of England, France and Japan were eliminated in China, in the conditions of the actual split of the country into self-governing regions, while maintaining the nominal government in Beijing, all the great powers maintained ties with certain local cliques, through them their influence. In addition, there were two governments in the country: the northern one in Beijing and the southern one in Guangzhou, of which the first was recognized in the international arena as the government of a united China, although it could not fully exercise its functions within the country. In the conditions of the national liberation upsurge, active Soviet propaganda and the USSR's ties with Guangzhou, on May 31, 1924, the Peking government, following England and Italy, began to normalize relations with the USSR. On January 20, 1925, Soviet-Japanese relations were normalized on the basis of the recognition by the parties of the Portsmouth Peace Treaty, and by May 15, Japanese troops were withdrawn from Northern Sakhalin, and the USSR was recognized as a sphere of influence in Northern Manchuria. Thus, the USSR created the prerequisites for more active interference in Chinese affairs in the process of opposing the Washington system of international relations.

On May 30, 1925, during a strike in Shanghai at a Japanese enterprise, the British police used weapons against the strikers, which led to an explosion of indignation in the country. A broad anti-imperialist movement began, striking primarily at Britain's positions in China. The US and Japan tried to give the initiative to suppress the British movement, gradually strengthening their influence in the region. The USSR also used the events that had begun to expand its influence in China, as early as January 1924, assisting in the creation of an alliance of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Kuomintang (KMT) in Guangzhou, which was able to repel an attempted rebellion by local militarists and form the People's Revolutionary Army (NRA). In northern China, there was a struggle for Beijing between the army of General Feng Yuxian, supported by the USSR, and the troops of Zhang Zuolin,

who was supported by Japan. Meanwhile, in China, in July 1926, the NRA began the Northern Expedition, and by March 1927 the southern part of the country, up to the Yangtze, was subject to the government of Guangzhou. On March 22-23, 1927, NRA troops entered Nanjing and Shanghai, which sharply aggravated relations with Britain and the United States, which undertook shelling of the city and began negotiations with Chiang Kai-shek for support in the event of an anti-communist coup. Meanwhile, the USSR decided to push things forward by eliminating Chiang Kai-shek and increasing the influence of the CCP. In Beijing, on April 6, 1927, Zhang Zuolin's units attacked the Soviet consulate and seized documents on the alleged arrest of Chiang Kai-shek, which were immediately handed over to him. On April 12, Chiang Kai-shek carried out

an anti-communist coup, broke off the alliance with the CPC and began repressions against its members. From mid-1925, Anglo-Soviet relations began to deteriorate, as the British leadership believed that it was the USSR that provoked unrest in China. In 1926, in the context of the curtailment of social programs in England, mass strikes began, which sharply aggravated the internal situation in the country. The USSR not only used these events to expand propaganda, but also supported some trade unions financially, which led to an even greater cooling of Anglo-Soviet relations. On May 12, 1927, a Soviet trade mission was raided in London, where documents on Soviet assistance to strikers were found, and on May 27, England severed diplomatic relations with the USSR. On the same day, the Japanese leadership sent troops to Shandong to protect their protege Zhang Zuolin in Beijing from the NRA. At the same time, Tokyo faced the question of determining its foreign policy line in the current situation.

conferences June - August 1927, the Japanese leadership decided to strengthen the expansion in China. In early September 1927, Japanese troops were withdrawn from Shandong, and Chiang Kai-shek paid a visit to Japan, trying to regulate relations with this country in the context of the outbreak of civil war in southern China. The visit ended without much result, and the Nanjing leadership began to orient itself towards the United States, which used this opportunity to strengthen its positions in China. After the conclusion in March -

April 1928 of the American-Nanjing agreements on future treaties, the NRA began a campaign against Beijing. Japan again used troops in Shandong, but could not keep Zhang Zuoling from withdrawing his troops from Beijing. Moreover, a long-term Japanese protege in Manchuria was suspected of intending to negotiate with Chiang Kai-shek and the United States and was killed during his return to Mukden. Japan's open intervention led to the growth of the anti-Japanese movement in China. On June 5, 1928, the NRA occupied Beijing, on July 25 the government of Chiang Kai-shek was recognized by the United States, and on December 20 by England. On December 29, 1928, Zhang Zuoling's son and successor Zhang Xueliang recognized the authority of the KMT over Manchuria. Under these conditions, Japan, fearing to worsen relations with the United States and Britain, in May 1929 withdrew its troops from Shandong and on June 3, 1929, together with Germany and Italy, recognized the new government in China.

The consolidation of China made it possible for the Nanjing government to seek the abolition of the privileges of foreign powers. In 1928-1929. China managed to increase customs duties from 5% to 7.5% and return 20 of 33 concessions. In an effort to weaken Soviet influence in Manchuria, the Chinese leadership in March 1929 tried to achieve the implementation of the Soviet-Chinese agreement on the parity management of the CER. The refusal of the USSR caused an attempt by China to resolve this issue by force. On May 27, 1929, the Soviet consulate in Harbin was raided, where documents were found on the USSR's ties with the CPC and Feng Yuxian, who was in opposition to Chiang Kai-shek, and on July 10-11, the CER was occupied by Chinese troops. Negotiations of the parties due to the intransigence of the USSR did not produce results, which, along with border incidents, led to an escalation of the conflict. Britain, France and the United States called on the parties to solve problems within the framework of the Briand-Kellogg pact, but did not recognize the unauthorized actions of the Chinese side, fearing the creation of a precedent. Japan and Germany declared their non-intervention. In October - November 1929, the Red Army invaded Manchuria and defeated the troops of Zhang Xueliang. Feng Yuxian mutinied, pinning down Chiang Kai-shek's troops and preventing them from being used in Manchuria. Negotiations between the parties, mediated by Germany, led on December 22, 1929, to a settlement of the conflict on the basis of restoring the status quo.

As a result of the events in China, the balance of power of the great powers in the Far East has changed. In China, a new center of power has emerged, much more influential nationwide than the previous Beijing government. British influence in China declined while American influence increased. Japan was forced to reckon with the new situation in China. It seemed that a base had been created in the Far East to strengthen the Washington system by maintaining a balance of power between the USSR, China, and Japan. However, under the conditions of the beginning of the civil war in China between the CPC and the KMT, the rupture of Soviet-Chinese relations on December 15, 1927, and the military conflict in Manchuria, there was no basis for cooperation between Moscow and Nanjing, which objectively led to the destabilization of the system of international relations and opened the way for Japanese expansionism.

The events of 1931-1933 in the Far East again became the first internal crisis of the Versailles-Washington system.<sup>42</sup> Under the conditions of the world economic crisis, Japanese expansionism revived. The Great Powers were busy fighting the crisis and from this point of view were not a threat to Japan. China and the USSR after the military conflict of 1929 did not achieve an improvement in relations. Nanjing was occupied with the war with the CCP in southern China, while the USSR was developing Xinjiang economically and politically. All this ruled out the consolidation of Moscow and Nanjing against Japan. Taking advantage of the favorable international situation, on September 18, 1931, the troops of the Kwantung Army invaded Manchuria. Again not

Zhang Xueliang, who received help from Nanjing, in an effort to save the troops, withdrew them without getting involved in serious battles with the Japanese.

China's appeal to the League of Nations, which took up the study of the issue, demonstrated the disinterest of England and France in solving this problem. The US advised Nanjing not to be distracted from the war with the CCP. The Chinese leadership itself was interested in weakening the Manchurian army of Zhang Xueliang, as this strengthened the influence of Nanjing. Japan promoted the idea of restoring order in Manchuria and purging it of communist elements. Under the conditions of the proclamation of the CCP on November 7, 1931, the Soviet Republic of China, this propaganda met with full understanding in the West. This did not prevent the Japanese leadership from showing loyalty to the USSR and Soviet citizens on the CER. The USSR, for its part, showed no desire to intervene, although it condemned the aggression in the press. In November - December 1931, when Japanese troops began to advance into Northern Manchuria, which was considered a Soviet sphere of influence, relations between Moscow and Tokyo worsened somewhat, which gave rise to hopes in the Western world that a war would break out between them. But the Soviet leadership decided to come to an agreement and on December 31, 1931, offered Tokyo to conclude an agreement on neutrality on the basis of maintaining "freedom of hands" in China.

On January 7, 1932, the American leadership published its "doctrine of non-recognition" of changes in the Far East, while England did not officially react to these events at all. Japan's attack on Shanghai on January 23, 1932 aggravated its relations with Britain, France and the United States, which, even after undertaking a military demonstration, acted inconsistently. The USSR tried to take advantage of the situation and signed an agreement with Japan on the trade in gasoline with Manchuria and allowed her to use the Chinese Eastern Railway for military transportation. However, the situation around Shanghai was settled, and the Soviet-Japanese contradictions in Manchuria, where Manchukuo was proclaimed on March 1, 1932, revived again. The USSR tacitly supported the anti-Japanese uprisings and the actions of the CPC partisan detachments. In the autumn of 1932, the USSR tried to negotiate with Japan on the basis of mutual recognition of the status

quo and a non-aggression pact, but Japan rejected these proposals, because it was interested in maintaining uncertainty and a controlled confrontation with the USSR, which made it possible to propagate the anti-communist struggle and receive the support of Western powers. The USSR, which did not have diplomatic relations with the USA and China and only on October 3, 1929 restored diplomatic relations with England, was isolated in the Asia-Pacific region, and Japan could not be afraid of alternative Soviet blocs. Under these conditions, China and the USSR restored diplomatic relations on December 12, 1932, and the next day Japan officially renounced the non-aggression pact proposed by the USSR. On February 24, 1933, the League of Nations finally considered the Manchurian issue and, stating Japan's violation of the 9-power treaty, spoke in favor of not recognizing Manchukuo. As a result, Japan withdrew from the League of Nations on March 27.

The consensus of the Pacific and Far Eastern powers collapsed, marking a crisis in the system of international relations. The lack of support from the great powers forced China to make concessions to Japan, which led to the truce in Tangu on May 31, 1933, which was perceived in the world as the end of the crisis. Freed from the threat of expanding the conflict, Japan increased pressure on the USSR on the issue of the CER, and in 1935 it was sold to Manchukuo. This led to a narrowing of Soviet influence in Manchuria, but allowed Moscow to avoid a war in the Far East. Meanwhile, in Europe in the second half of the 1920s. Germany succeeded in eliminating a number of control provisions of the Treaty of Versailles. In 1929, a new system was developed for paying reparations in foreign currency, while reducing annual contributions and ending payments in 1988 (the Young Plan), the adoption of which by Germany led to the withdrawal of the occupying troops from the

Rhineland in June 1930.

Since the currency crisis since July 1931, a moratorium on mutual settlements was introduced, and the payment of reparations was stopped. During the Lausanne Conference (June 16 - July 9, 1932), German reparations were reduced to 3 billion marks, which were to be paid within 15 years. At the disarmament conference on December 11, 1932, England, France, Italy and the USA recognized Germany's equal rights in the development of the armed forces. Such concessions to Germany caused a noticeable concern of the French leadership, which began to look for opportunities for rapprochement with the USSR. The conclusion of non-aggression treaties between the USSR and Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Poland in 1932 secured its northwestern borders from a possible anti-Soviet union of these countries and made it possible to conclude a Soviet-French non-aggression pact on November 29, 1932. Using put forward by France in the late 1920s. the idea of a pan-European union, England and Italy proposed a draft treaty of the great powers of Europe, which was signed on July 15, 1933, but never entered into force. Having failed to meet its demands for rearmament, Germany left the disarmament conference and on October 14, 1933, withdrew from the League of Nations. This prompted France to continue rapprochement with the USSR and led to the start of negotiations on the Eastern Pact.

As a result of the events of the early 1930s. in the Far East and in Europe, the system of international relations gave the first cracks. Japan, using the disunity of the USSR and the West and the rivalry of the great powers in the Far East, began a violent revision of the Versailles-Washington system. However, faced with the choice of the direction of further expansion, she decided not to bring things to a war with the USSR and pursue a cautious policy in China, trying to expand her zone of influence by peaceful means and create a military-economic base in Manchuria for the future. Germany was able, with the consent of the other Great Powers, to revise the reparations and military restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles and secured for itself a wider room for maneuver among the Great Powers. England continued the policy of consolidating Europe, which led to new concessions to Germany. The United States tried to use the situation to complicate the position of England and agreed to diplomatic recognition of the USSR, hoping to use it as a counterbalance to Japan. Fearing for its security, France advocated the creation of a European system of collective security with the involvement of the USSR. The USSR, on whose Far Eastern borders a hotbed of military tension arose, began to establish contacts with its western neighbors, France and the United States, declaring support for the policy of collective security in order to ensure a solid rear in Europe. Italy sought to increase its influence in Central Europe (Austria, Hungary) and the Eastern Mediterranean.

The second internal crisis of the Versailles-Washington system, which marked its collapse, broke out in 1935-1938 in Europe and the Far East. Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations led, on the initiative of England, to lively negotiations on the conditions for her return to this organization. The British leadership tried to find a compromise between the demands of Germany and the interests of France, which, in the face of a growing threat to its security, continued to seek the conclusion of the Eastern Pact. This agreement, which originated in the conditions of German-Polish rapprochement, the deterioration of Soviet-German relations and the development of Franco-Soviet contacts, for various reasons did not suit England, Germany, Italy and Poland, which made its conclusion impossible and stimulated the development of a Soviet-French mutual assistance treaty. . The result of the negotiations on the Eastern Pact was the entry of the USSR on the initiative of France into the League of Nations in September 1934. At the same time, in the face of the threat to the independence of Austria in the summer of 1934, the Franco-Italian rapprochement began, ending on January 7, 1935 with an agreement on the assistance of the Italian leadership in counteracting the violation Germany of Versailles military and territorial restrictions in exchange for the recognition of Italian interests in Ethiopia.

On March 1, 1935, following a plebiscite, the Saarland was transferred to the jurisdiction of Germany, expanding its economic base. On February 3, 1935, Britain and France proposed to Germany negotiations on armaments and on a mutual assistance pact in Eastern Europe. In response, Germany agreed to bilateral negotiations, which England immediately took advantage of. On March 4, 1935, a "White Paper" on the armed forces was published in England, and in France on March 15, the terms of service in the army were increased, which gave Germany a reason to announce the rejection of the military restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles. On March 10, 1935, the creation of the Air Force was officially announced in Berlin, and on March 16, the introduction of universal military service. On March 18, Germany offered to guarantee all its borders, which was successfully used by her in propaganda. On March 25-26, Anglo-German, and on March 28-29, Anglo-Soviet negotiations took place, during which the parties exchanged views, respectively,

on German armaments and on the attitude of the USSR to events in Europe. Germany's refusal to comply with the military restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles led to the creation of the Anglo-French-Italian "Stresa Front" April 11-14, 1935. On May 2, 1935, France signed a mutual assistance treaty with the USSR, which, however, was not supplemented by a military convention, which limited its value. The incompleteness of the process of creating a Franco-Soviet alliance reflected the need for France to retain its allies in Eastern Europe, who were generally opposed to a possible union with the USSR. In addition, France was afraid of being accused of splitting Europe into military-political blocs and continued dialogue with Germany in the hope of a settlement. In response to the conclusion of the Soviet-French and Soviet-Czechoslovak mutual assistance treaties, Germany on May 21, 1935 demanded a revision of the status of the Rhineland. The creation of the Stresa Front did not prevent England from continuing negotiations with Germany on naval armaments. The conclusion of the Anglo-German agreement on June 18, 1935 was a bilateral violation of the Treaty of Versailles, dealt a blow to the Stresa front, making it easier for Germany to play on the contradictions of the great European powers, worsened Anglo-French relations and stimulated Italy's expansionist claims in Ethiopia. On June 19, 1935, a Franco-Italian military agreement was signed on the use of the troops of the parties in Austria and on the Rhine. England, interested in maintaining normal relations with Italy, on June 23, 1935, during the Anglo-Italian negotiations on the settlement of the Ethiopian problem on the basis of an exchange of territories, tacitly agreed to any actions of Italy in

Africa. Italy's attack on October 3, 1935 on Ethiopia and the discussion of this issue in the League of Nations in the context of the election campaign in England led to the establishment of economic sanctions against Italy on November 18, 1935. To please public opinion, England concentrated the Home Fleet in the Mediterranean, without ceasing secret searches for ways to satisfy Italy in Africa. A clash with Italy or its defeat was not the goal of England, because it could undermine the stability of the fascist regime and increase the danger of creating a "red Italy". France refused to support England's naval demonstration in the Mediterranean and secretly violated economic sanctions. Germany, the USA, Japan, Austria, Hungary, Albania and a number of other countries that have expanded their presence in the Italian market did not participate in the sanctions. The crisis in Italy's relations with England and France was used by Germany to normalize relations with Rome. The desire to create a powerful counterbalance to England in Europe in order to make it difficult for her to pursue a policy of economic rivalry determined the foreign policy strategy of the United States, which used the escalation of tension around Ethiopia to adopt a law on neutrality in 1935, which made it difficult to cooperate with other countries in repelling aggression, but did not affect economic relationship aspects.

In the face of cooling relations between England, France and Italy, Germany was preparing the remilitarization of the Rhineland, using as a pretext the forthcoming ratification of the Soviet-French treaty of mutual assistance. England, France and the United States had information about the intentions of Berlin, but for various reasons decided not to

oppose them. England hoped to increase its influence on the foreign policy of France in the face of the growing German threat. The French leadership, counting on the support of England and Italy, did not take any independent action, although, according to the Locarno Treaty, it had the right to do so. The US was interested in complicating Britain's position in Europe. Therefore, when the German troops entered the Rhineland on March 7, 1936, they met no resistance from France. The League of Nations stated that Germany violated the Versailles and Locarno treaties, which gave France a formal reason to demand help from England and Italy. However, Italy refused to cooperate until the economic sanctions imposed on it were lifted and the occupation of Ethiopia was recognized, while England referred to the absence of a threat to French territory. The German adventure was a success, and Berlin immediately offered to replace the Locarno treaties with new non-aggression agreements, drawing England and France into futile negotiations. As a result of France's inaction, its positions in Europe and the system of alliances were dealt a severe blow, which strengthened the trend of "appeasement" in the French

politics.

England's desire to get closer to Turkey, which was supposed to be used as a counterbalance to Italy, led London to support the desire of Moscow and Ankara to revise the decisions of the Lausanne Conference on the regime of the Black Sea Straits. Italy refused to participate in the conference until the lifting of economic sanctions, but even after their lifting, the position of Rome remained unchanged. During the conference in Montreux (June 22 - July 21, 1936), England and France agreed to change the regime of the Black Sea straits, taking into account the interests of the USSR. The beginning of the Franco rebellion in Spain on July 18, 1936 helped to divert the attention of England and France from Central European problems. Germany and Italy almost immediately supported Franco, demonstrating to the whole world their anti-communist position, behind which was the desire to increase influence in Spain and the western Mediterranean. The position of non-intervention taken by Britain, France and the United States was the best suited to the solution of this problem. Despite the complication of the situation in the Mediterranean, the British leadership considered it necessary, under the guise of pacifist rhetoric, to pursue a policy of "non-intervention", that is, in fact, to support Franco, who was seen as a guarantee against the "red danger", especially in the context of expanding Soviet intervention in the war. Under British pressure, France also agreed to pursue a policy of non-intervention. The French leadership did not dare to further rapprochement with the USSR, fearing a deterioration in relations with England and Germany and the collapse of their alliances in Eastern Europe, which also had an anti-Soviet orientation. Such an indecisive policy of France led to the withdrawal of her former allies from her. The application of the US law on neutrality during the Spanish Civil War was a direct support for the rebels and interventionists and contributed to the strengthening of Germany and the formation of the German-Italian alliance, which was considered in the US as a counterweight to England and France.

The changing situation in Europe stimulated the rapprochement of Germany, Italy and Japan. The occupation of Ethiopia and other African problems forced Italy to seek a counterbalance to England and France. On the basis of Franco's help, Italy is getting closer and closer to Germany, and on October 26, 1936, the "Berlin-Rome Axis" arises. The entry of the USSR into the League of Nations, the signing of the Soviet-French and Soviet-Czechoslovak treaties in May 1935, and Moscow's support for the MPR required Japan to search for anti-Soviet allies in Europe, so Tokyo favorably received the German soundings that began in May 1935. In the autumn of 1935 and in the spring of 1936, new clashes broke out on the Mongolian-Manchurian border, which forced the USSR to openly declare its alliance with the MPR. This, in turn, hastened the conclusion of the Anti-Comintern Pact by Germany and Japan on November 25, 1936, which was reinforced by a new clash on the Manchurian-Soviet border near Lake Khanka on November 26-27, 1936. Thus, Japan clearly demonstrated to the whole world the anti-communist background of its actions. . December 2, 1936 was concluded

the Italian-Japanese treaty, and on November 6, 1937, Italy entered the Anti-Comintern Pact. Within the framework of the German-Austrian agreement on July 11, 1936, the possibility of German influence on this country was ensured. Having promised Belgium a guarantee of its independence and territorial inviolability, Germany achieved its rejection of the Locarno agreements and the proclamation of neutrality on October 14, 1936.

Given the busyness of England and France with Spanish events, cooperation with Germany and Italy, and not fearing US intervention, Japan decided to move on to active operations on the continent. The Soviet-Manchurian incident on the Amur on June 29-30, 1937 gave Japan the opportunity to demonstrate to the West the immutability of its anti-communist course, and on July 7, 1937, Japan launched a war in China. Britain's proposal on July 12, 1937 to undertake a joint demarche in Tokyo and Nanjing was not supported by the United States, which, counting on the aggravation of Anglo-Japanese relations, on July 16, 1937 announced that they did not exclude the possibility of revising the results of the Washington Conference. The rivalry between England and the United States in the Far East was successfully used by the Japanese leadership. The conclusion of the Soviet-Chinese non-aggression pact on August 21, 1937 worsened Japanese-Soviet relations, but the parties only intensified the propaganda war in the press. In September 1937, the CCP and the KMT created a united front, while Britain and the United States recognized Japan's naval blockade of the Chinese coast. Britain's proposal in October 1937 to discuss the boycott of Japan did not meet v

In this situation, the League of Nations once again demonstrated its inefficiency. Since the great powers, in the conditions of the onset of the crisis, tried not to spoil relations with Japan, which absorbed a significant part of their exports, the conference of the countries participating in the agreement of 9 powers in Brussels in November 1937, due to the general unwillingness to interfere in the Japanese-Chinese conflict, ended inconclusively, indicating the collapse of the Washington system. The American leadership, knowing the weakness of the Japanese economy, was not at all afraid of any anti-American military actions on its part. Britain and the United States were more concerned about their negotiations with Germany, while Japan successfully used the bogey of the Soviet threat. Even the attack of Japanese troops on British and American ships caused only diplomatic protests from England and the USA. True, since January 1938 the United States expanded its naval program, but the Anglo-American negotiations of December 1937 January 1938 on cooperation against Japan were interrupted, since each side sought to shift the main burden of action onto the partner. Japan's refusal to comply with the requirement of a joint Anglo-French-American note dated February 5, 1938 to stop the construction of naval bases on the mandated islands, which began in 1935 and goes beyond the framework of the Washington agreements, also did not lead to any sanctions. Since the

spring of 1938, England and France have been connected by developments around Austria and Czechoslovakia, but Japan, which was experiencing a financial and economic crisis, decided to demonstrate its good relations with England and the USA. In May 1938, England handed over control of Chinese customs in the occupied territory to Japan, and in July secret Anglo-Japanese negotiations began, which aroused US concern and aggravated Anglo-American relations. In the context of growing public dissatisfaction with the connivance of Japanese aggression and sympathy for the USSR, which supplied China with weapons, the United States was forced on June 16, 1938 to impose a "moral embargo" on the supply of aviation equipment to Japan, which did not have any serious consequences. The offensive of the Japanese troops in the Yangtze River valley required certain actions from the USSR to divert the attention of Tokyo. The conflict at Lake Khasan, provoked by the Soviet side, caused a drop in the price of securities on the Tokyo Stock Exchange and allowed the parties to demonstrate their intransigence. November 3, 1938 Japan announced plans to create a "Great East Asia". This led to the beginning of Anglo-American naval negotiations on cooperation in the Pacific, which, however, ended in vain. In December 1938, England and the United States provided loans to China in order to



to keep him from capitulating, since the prolongation of the war fettered Japan and was beneficial to England, France, the USA and the USSR. The captures of Japan in February 1939 in southern China provoked protests from England, France and the United States, but Washington's proposal to back up these protests by sending a navy met with British objection.

The strengthening of the German economy and the new decline in world production that began in 1937 contributed to the fact that Germany began to demand more and more clearly the revision of the territorial decisions of Versailles. It was from 1937 that the idea of "appeasement" of Germany at the expense of Eastern Europe and the USSR came to the fore in British foreign policy. Satisfaction of Germany's expansionist claims, in the opinion of the British leadership, should have led to a new "pact of the four". Separate negotiations between the United States and Britain with Germany in November 1937 showed the German leadership that neither Britain, nor the United States, nor France would intervene in the event of the annexation of Austria, Sudetenland and Danzig, if these changes did not lead to war in Europe. Since the autumn of 1937, German pressure on Austria has been growing. During the Anglo-French negotiations on November 29-30, 1937, the parties agreed that their interests in Eastern Europe were not of a fundamental nature and did not require anti-German actions. Austria's attempts to find support in England and France proved futile, and on March 12-13, 1938, it was annexed by Germany, which significantly improved its strategic position in the center of Europe. On March 17, 1938, the USSR proposed to convene a conference to combat aggression, but England, fearing a split of Europe into military-political blocs, spoke out against this idea. The aggravation of the situation around Czechoslovakia in April-May 1938 demonstrated the unwillingness of Britain and France to interfere in the affairs of

Eastern Europe. The proposals of the USSR to hold military negotiations with France and Czechoslovakia on April 27 and May 13 were not accepted, since it would be "a misfortune if Czechoslovakia were saved thanks to Soviet assistance" 44. England tried to revive the Stresa Front and on April 16, 1938, recognized the capture of Ethiopia by Italy in exchange for maintaining the status quo in the Mediterranean, but failed to split the German-Italian axis. The May crisis of 1938 showed that the policy of non-intervention was fraught with the loss of Anglo-French influence on the development of events, therefore, at the height of the crisis, both governments announced on May 21, 1938, intervention in the event of German aggression, which forced Germany to retreat. However, instead of helping Czechoslovakia, Britain and France stepped up pressure on her in favor of transferring strategically important border areas to Germany. The British leadership feared that intransigence in the Sudeten question could lead to a German-American rapprochement, and even to the collapse of the Nazi regime, which did not meet the interests of England. The United States, for its part, through its ambassador in London on July 20, 1938, hinted to Berlin that in the event of cooperation between the United States and Germany, Washington would support the German demands on England or would do everything to satisfy the German demands on Czechoslovakia. Italy during the Czechoslovak crisis tried to distract Germany from the Mediterranean problems and eliminate the stronghold of French influence in Central Europe.

In the summer of 1938, the British leadership sought to find a new compromise between the great powers of Europe. But instead of putting pressure on Germany, England and France continued to demand concessions from Czechoslovakia in the name of maintaining peace in Europe, since the war could contribute to its Bolshevization. Thus, Czechoslovakia became a bargaining chip in the policy of appeasement of Germany and the basis of a new compromise. The British leadership proceeded from the fact that a weak Germany did not want, and a strong France could not, consolidate British hegemony. Therefore, it was necessary to strengthen Germany, weaken France, and at the same time isolate the USSR, which on September 21 again proposed holding a conference to work out measures against aggression. As a result, on September 29-30, 1938, during the Munich Conference, England and France transferred the Sudetenland to Germany in exchange for a declaration of non-aggression. England viewed the Munich Agreement as

a fundamental basis for further Anglo-German compromise on all cardinal problems. The escalation of the crisis

and the pacifying position of England and France allowed Italy to play the role of a peacemaker at the Munich Conference and, playing on the contradictions of the great powers, by the beginning of 1939 significantly increase its role in European affairs. At the same time, the Italian leadership was forced to abandon its aspirations in Central Europe in favor of Germany. As a result of the Munich Agreement, France's system of military alliances collapsed, and the Franco-German declaration of border guarantees and consultations could not replace it. In December 1938, France recognized the Italian occupation of Ethiopia. This was the apogee of the appeasement policy, which dealt a colossal blow not only to the influence of England and France in Europe, but also to the entire Versailles system, which practically ceased to exist.

Crisis and collapse of the Versailles-Washington system during the 1930s. could not but lead to another clash between the great powers. In this sense, we can say that the Second World War was a natural phenomenon in the period of changing systems of international relations and could hardly have been prevented, since economic changes in the world led to a change in the balance of power of the great powers, and the achievement of a new agreement on the status quo made it difficult to determine the new balance of power. The great powers, by inertia, continued to build their policy based on the usual assessments and trying to make the most of the current situation in their own interests. The United States, Germany and the USSR sought to completely reorganize the system of international relations, while England and France agreed only to its partial modernization, while Italy and Japan occupied an intermediate position, striving to use the growing crisis to the maximum advantage. The postponement of a comprehensive settlement led to an accumulation of problems and created an even more explosive situation. Its result was the emergence of the Second World War, which was a combination of wars of the great powers between themselves and other countries for expanding their influence and redefining the borders that had developed in 1919-1922, and, like previous conflicts of the great powers, was of an imperialist nature, complemented by liberation struggle of the occupied countries and territories.

## **Political crisis of 1939**

The development of the international situation in Europe in the late 1930s inexorably led to a new armed clash between the great powers. By the end of 1938, the Versailles system in Europe practically ceased to exist, and the Munich Agreement significantly strengthened Germany. Under these conditions, the German leadership set itself a new foreign policy goal - to achieve hegemony in Europe, securing the role of a great world power. As a result of the aggressive actions of Germany and Italy in March-April 1939, a pre-war political crisis began in Europe - a period of direct alignment of military-political forces in anticipation of a probable war. The events of 1939 have been at the center of attention of world and

domestic historiography for more than 50 years. In foreign historiography, these events became the object of a comprehensive analysis and served as the basis for the formation of various historiographic concepts. Until the second half of the 1980s, Russian historical science was dominated by the system that had developed back in 1939-1941. and finally fixed in the "historical reference" of 1948 "Falsifiers of History" official point of view<sup>45</sup>. After the fundamental aspects of the problems of the history of the pre-war political crisis in Europe became the subject of heated discussion in the late 1980s, this forced unanimity disintegrated, and a natural situation of a dispute of points of view arose in Russian historiography, which makes it possible to more objectively explore

past. A significant number of works devoted to the events of 1939 makes it possible to give a generalized picture of them and highlight the main trends in the development of international relations. Although the Munich Agreement created a new political environment in Europe, it was seen by all the great powers as the next stage in their relationship. The situation of autumn 1938 - summer 1939 in Europe was a tangled tangle of diplomatic activities of the great powers, each of which sought to achieve its own goals.

As soon as the implementation of the Munich Agreement was completed, on October 24, 1938, Germany proposed to Poland to settle the problems of Danzig and the "Polish Corridor" on the basis of cooperation within the framework of the Anti-Comintern Pact. Thus, Germany would solve for itself the task of rear cover from the East (including from the USSR) in anticipation of the final occupation of Czechoslovakia, would revise the German-Polish border established in 1919, and would significantly strengthen its positions in Eastern Europe. Meanwhile, Poland, continuing its traditional policy of balancing between Berlin and Moscow, on October 21-22 began sounding the USSR with a view to normalizing Soviet-Polish relations, which had aggravated during the Czechoslovak crisis in the summer of 1938. On November 4, Moscow proposed signing a communiqué on the normalization of relations, which, after consultations and was signed on 27 November. The next day, Poland notified Germany that this declaration only applied to bilateral Soviet-Polish relations and was not aimed at involving the USSR in solving European problems. The Polish leadership was afraid that too close rapprochement with Germany could lead to the loss of independence, therefore, despite repeated discussions of German proposals in October 1938 - January 1939, Berlin did not receive the desired answer<sup>46</sup>.

Although, under certain conditions, the creation of a German-Polish-Japanese military alliance with an anti-Soviet orientation was not ruled out, Poland's position was complicated by the presence of German-Polish problems. In addition, Germany itself did not yet set as its goal a war with the USSR, but, preparing for the capture of Czecho-Slovakia, was interested in the neutralization of Poland and the non-intervention of England and France, to influence which anti-Soviet rhetoric was again used. It is no coincidence that Berlin sanctioned the hype in the press regarding plans to create a "Great Ukraine" under a German protectorate, which was met with understanding in London and Paris. The Franco-German declaration of December 6, 1938, and new attempts made in January 1939 to achieve a positive response from Warsaw to the German proposals contributed to the same goal. The Polish leadership agreed to certain concessions on the issue of Danzig only in exchange for Germany's retaliatory steps. The intransigence of Poland led to the fact that the German leadership began to incline to the idea of the need for a military solution to the Polish problem under certain conditions<sup>47</sup>.

England and France hoped to consolidate and continue the process of changes they controlled on the continent in order to consolidate the European great powers on this basis. Anglo-German and Franco-German relations were somewhat overshadowed by the November pogroms in Germany and the rumors that appeared in January 1939 about the preparation of a German attack on Holland. All this forced Britain and France to coordinate their policies, speed up the modernization of their armed forces, maintain contacts with the USSR and at the same time seek a comprehensive agreement with Germany in the spirit of Munich. As the secret Anglo-German economic talks in October 1938-March 1939 showed, the prospect of a broad economic agreement between the two countries was quite real. This was especially evident during the economic negotiations in Düsseldorf on March 15-16, 1939, which ended with the signing of a cartel agreement by representatives of the industry of both countries. From October 1938, France also intensified the process of rapprochement with Germany, which was supported by England. London and Paris, in principle, did not exclude the recognition of Eastern Europe as a zone

German influence, provided that the German threat is eliminated for itself and the unilateral expansionist actions of Berlin stop. According to the British leadership, this opened up the prospect for further movement towards a comprehensive agreement between England, France, Germany and Italy<sup>48</sup>.

On January 11-14, 1939, Anglo-Italian negotiations were held in Rome, during which the issue of Italian mediation in Anglo-German relations was discussed. Mussolini easily promised his assistance, although he was surprised by such an obvious error of the British leadership. On February 2, France offered Italy secret negotiations on colonial issues, which opened up the possibility of normalizing Franco-Italian relations and could lead to some cooling of Italo-German ties. At the same time, in Berlin, France probed the possibility of German assistance in improving Franco-Italian relations. This did not suit Germany at all, and information about Franco-Italian contacts was leaked to the press, which led to their failure<sup>49</sup>. Expecting to become the leading force on the continent, Germany sought recognition of the status of

a world power from England and France, which was impossible without a show of force or even defeat of these countries. By March 1939, it became clear to the German leadership that, although German influence in Eastern Europe had increased significantly, it still had not become decisive. Achieving this goal required new political action. The final elimination of Czecho-Slovakia allowed Germany to demonstrate its strength to its eastern neighbors, making them more accommodating, and significantly reduce the danger of an anti-German alliance in Eastern Europe. According to Berlin, the solution of the Czechoslovak question would lead to the neutralization of Poland, the economic subjugation of Hungary, Romania and Yugoslavia. The return of Memel (Klaipeda) would lead to German control over Lithuania and the strengthening of German influence in the Baltics. This would have provided the rear for the war in the West, which was considered in Berlin as the first stage in ensuring German hegemony in Europe. Only after solving this problem could Germany afford an anti-Soviet campaign. Proceeding from these general considerations and continuing the policy of balancing between West and East, the German leadership from the autumn of 1938 began to

gradually achieve the normalization of relations with the USSR. On December 19, 1938, the Soviet-German trade agreement was extended to 1939 without any delay. On December 22, Berlin offered the USSR to resume negotiations on a 200 million loan, hinting at the need for a general normalization of relations. Fearing a German-Polish rapprochement as a result of the visit of Polish Foreign Minister J. Beck to Germany on January 5-6, 1939, the Soviet side agreed to start economic negotiations on January 11, and the next day Hitler talked for several minutes at a diplomatic reception with the Soviet plenipotentiary that became a sensation in diplomatic circles. Again failing to get a clear answer from Poland to its proposals, Germany authorized the transfer of Transcarpathia to Hungary, which displeased Poland, but reassured the USSR, which feared that this territory would become the embryo of a "Great Ukraine"<sup>51</sup>. Having signed an agreement with England on the supply of coal, Germany on January 20 notified the USSR that a German representative would arrive in Moscow on January 30 to conduct economic

negotiations. In an effort to raise the importance of the USSR in Europe, the Soviet side on January 27 initiated the penetration of information about this into the British press. Fearing a deterioration in relations with England, Germany on January 28 announced the postponement of the negotiations. Naturally, the USSR was dissatisfied with the fact that Germany was looking back at England and France, since this confirmed the possibility of reviving the "agreement of the four." True, the negotiations were not finally interrupted and continued sluggishly in the following months. The political situation continued to change. On January 2, 1939, Poland established consular relations with Manchukuo, and on January 12, Hungary declared its readiness to enter into

Anti-Comintern Pact. As a countermeasure, on February 2, Moscow severed diplomatic relations with Budapest, and on February 19, a Soviet-Polish trade agreement was signed. On February 24, Manchukuo and Hungary joined the Anti-Comintern Pact; on February 27, the Franco government in Spain was recognized de jure by England and France<sup>52</sup>.

The refinement of the tactics of Soviet diplomacy, which began in the autumn of 1938, found its expression in the pages of the Bolshevik magazine, where V. Galyanov's article "The International Situation in the Second Imperialist War" was published. Under this pseudonym, the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR V. Potemkin was hiding. The article gives a general idea of the foreign policy doctrine of the Soviet Union, which proceeded from the fact that the Second World War had already begun, since in the second half of the 1930s. A number of military actions were taken that changed the situation in the world. These events divided the main capitalist powers into aggressors (Germany, Italy, Japan) and those who condone aggression (England, France, USA). Although this connivance harms the interests of the Western powers, it is a policy aimed at clashing the aggressors and the USSR, which is a bulwark of revolution and social progress. England and France make concessions to Germany and Italy, because they fear the collapse of the fascist regimes, which may be replaced by Bolshevism.

Analyzing the international situation, the author showed the weakness and conflict nature of the German-Italian-Japanese bloc, whose expansion follows the path of least resistance. Therefore, in the first place, the aggressors threaten the interests of England, France and the United States, but they are in no hurry to spoil relations with the USSR, although they conduct anti-Soviet propaganda. Germany will continue to pursue a policy of blackmail and threats, the object of which this time, most likely, will be France, which did everything to weaken the Soviet-French treaty of 1935. The degree of loyalty of the capitalist countries to their obligations was demonstrated in the summer of 1938, when only the USSR was ready to help Czechoslovakia. As the crisis of capitalism grows, the USSR strengthens, on the side of which are the sympathies of all progressive mankind. The further perspective of events was drawn to the author as follows. "The front of the second imperialist war is ever expanding. One nation after another is being drawn into it. Mankind is advancing towards great battles that will unleash a world revolution." "The end of this second war will be marked by the final rout of the old, capitalist world," when "between the two millstones—the Soviet Union, which has menacingly risen to its full gigantic stature, and the invincible wall of revolutionary democracy, which has risen to its aid—the remnants of capitalist system"<sup>53</sup>

Similar ideas were voiced in the speech of A.A. Zhdanov at the Leningrad party conference on March 3, 1939, in which he, recalling that the USSR is "the strongest, most independent power", stated that because of this, fascism is "an expression of world reaction, the imperialist bourgeoisie, the aggressive bourgeoisie" - threatens mainly England and France. Under these conditions, England would very much like "Hitler to unleash a war with the Soviet Union," so she tries to push Germany and the USSR in order to stay on the sidelines, hoping to "rake in the heat with the wrong hands, wait for the situation when the enemies are weakened, and pick up." In Zhdanov's opinion, this simple maneuver was guessed by Moscow, which will "save up our forces for the time when we will deal with Hitler and Mussolini, and at the same time, of course, with Chamberlain"<sup>54</sup>. These materials are important in that they complement the description of the international situation given by Stalin in the Report of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks to the XVIII Party Congress on March 10, 1939, in which the tasks of Soviet foreign policy were formulated in the conditions of the beginning of a new imperialist war and the desire of England, France and the United States to direct German-Japanese aggression against the USSR. The Soviet Union had to "continue to pursue a policy of peace and strengthening business ties with all countries; be careful and not let our country be drawn into conflicts by war provo-

by someone else's hands; strengthen in every possible way the combat power" of its armed forces and "strengthen international ties of friendship with the working people of all countries interested in peace and friendship between peoples," which made it possible to continue using propaganda to maintain the image of the "country of workers and peasants." From the context of the speech, it becomes clear that the "igniters" of the war are the countries pursuing a policy of non-intervention: England, France and the USA<sup>55</sup> Under these conditions, the goal of the Soviet leadership was to use the crisis and the contradictions of the great powers to further strengthen its influence in the world with the prospect of finally resolving the question

of the existence of a capitalist society. In mid-March In 1939, the United States, the USSR, Britain and France had information about Germany's preparations for the occupation of Czecho-Slovakia, but the powers-guarantors of the Munich Agreement did not provide for any countermeasures. In addition, formally, the Munich guarantees of the Czecho-Slovak borders were not violated by Germany's actions. 14 March Slovakia, under pressure from Germany, declared independence, and the President of Czechoslovakia went to Berlin, where in the course of "negotiations" he agreed to the political reorganization of his country. On March 15, German troops entered the Czech Republic, on whose territory the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was created. Initially, the reaction of England and France was rather restrained, but as public opinion aroused, London and Paris toughened their position and on March 18, like the USSR, they protested the actions of Germany, and the British and French ambassadors were recalled from Berlin "for consultations". The US also did not recognize the annexations and froze Czechoslovak assets in its banks. England formally did the same, but the Czechoslovak

gold was secretly returned to Prague. In the meantime, in the course of ongoing German-Romanian economic negotiations, Anglophile circles in Bucharest decided to probe Britain's reaction to the possibility of further German economic penetration into Romania. On March 17, the Romanian envoy in London informed the Foreign Office that Germany was preparing to present an ultimatum to Romania, the execution of which would put its economy at the service of the Reich. This message prompted England to intensify its policy in Eastern Europe, and on March 18 she asked the USSR about its actions in the event of a German attack on Romania. Similar requests were sent to Poland, Greece, Yugoslavia and Turkey. In turn, these countries asked Britain about her intentions, and the USSR proposed to convene a conference with the participation of the USSR, Britain, France, Poland, Romania and Turkey to discuss the situation. On March 21, England put forward a counterproposal to sign an Anglo-French-Soviet-Polish declaration on consultations in the event of aggression. On the same day, Germany again offered Poland to resolve the issue of handing over Danzig and the "Polish corridor" in exchange for joining the Anti-Comintern Pact with the prospect of anti-Sovi

The discussion of the question of the declaration proposed by London revealed that Poland and Romania do not want to sign the document if it bears the signature of a Soviet representative. In turn, Moscow, fearing to push Warsaw into the arms of Berlin, was not going to sign this document without the participation of Poland. London tried to take into account the opinion, they did not approve of flirting with Moscow. As a result, by the end of March, the issue of the declaration was dropped, and the above problem was again postponed for the future. The Anglo-Soviet economic contacts on March 23-27 also ended with no results.

In the meantime, on March 21-22, England and France agreed to start military negotiations on March 27, during which it was decided that in the event of war, England would send to France initially 2 divisions, after 11 months - 2 more divisions, and after 18 months - 2 tank divisions. Options for helping Poland were not even considered. It was believed that "the fate of Poland will be determined by the overall results of the war, and the latter, in turn, will depend on the ability of the Western powers to defeat Germany in the final analy

and not on whether they can ease German pressure on Poland at the very beginning. "The main method of military action of the Western Allies was to be the defense and economic blockade of Germany. The actions of the Air Force were limited only to military facilities. Based on these plans, England and France were interested in prolonging the war in Eastern Europe, which would tie up the German initiative and enable them to better prepare for war<sup>60</sup>

In the meantime, in Eastern Europe, London and Paris have tried to create a Polish-Romanian anti-German alliance. However, Poland was not inclined to participate in this alliance, but sought to get support in limiting German expansion for further maneuvering between Berlin and Moscow. Therefore, Warsaw refused both anti-Soviet and anti-German combinations, although on March 23 it offered England an agreement on consultations in the event of a threat of aggression. The British leadership, exaggerating the power of Poland, decided to rely on it as a counterbalance to Germany from the East. On March 21-23, under the threat of force, Germany forced Lithuania to transfer the Memel (Klaipeda) region to it. All hopes of Kaunas for the support of England, France and Poland were in vain. Poland was not going to worsen relations with Germany, although it would not mind moving its borders to the west in the future, and England was preoccupied with rumors of an imminent German attack on Poland and a possible German-Polish rapprochement<sup>61</sup>

On March 23, England tried through Italy to achieve a settlement in the East of Europe, but this only provoked Rome in her own expansionist intentions. On the same day, the German-Romanian economic agreement was signed, which significantly strengthened Germany's influence in this country, and Poland carried out a partial mobilization. In an attempt to get Poland's consent to a guarantee of Romania's borders and to restrain German expansion, England agreed to unilateral guarantees of Poland's independence. Contrary to Warsaw's opinion about keeping them secret, on March 31 the guarantees were published, but at the same time England did not refuse to promote the German-Polish settlement. Nevertheless, Poland still refused to guarantee the borders of Romania. On April 4-6, during the Anglo-Polish negotiations, the parties gave each other mutual guarantees, and England, to a certain extent, became dependent on Poland on the issue of entering the war. The guarantees pushed Germany to demonstrate their worthlessness, Poland to further intransigence towards its neighbors, the Soviet Union was again shown its "second-rate", and the problem of supporting Romania was not resolved. At the same time, British guarantees could become for Moscow a kind of barrier from Germany, supported by England and France. On March 28, the USSR declared its interests in Estonia and Latvia<sup>62</sup>

As early as March 25, Germany did not intend to resolve the Polish issue in the near future, but after Poland finally refused to accept the German proposal for a territorial settlement on March 26, and on March 28 announced that the change in the status quo in Danzig would be considered an attack on Poland, which thwarted the implementation of the Nazi putsch there, the German leadership was faced with the question of preparing for war with Poland. On April 1, Berlin threatened to terminate the Anglo-German naval agreement of 1935 if London did not stop the policy of "encircling Germany". Concrete military planning began, the tasks of which were determined by the "Directive on the uniform preparation of the armed forces for war for 1939-1940", approved by Hitler on April 11. Now the German leadership was concerned about the localization of the future conflict. On April 7-12, Italy occupied Albania, which violated the Anglo-Italian agreement to maintain the status quo in the Mediterranean. On April 13, England and France gave guarantees to Romania and Greece, and on May 12 to Turkey, which was supposed to prevent these countries from rapprochement with Germany and maintain Anglo-French prestige. On April 15, the US President invited Germany and Italy to pledge not to attack the 31 countries mentioned in his message for 10 years in exchange for support in the issue of equal rights in international trade. On April 28, Germany terminated the Anglo-German naval agreement of 1935 and the treaty on

non-aggression with Poland in 1934, and on April 30 unofficially informed France that either London and Paris would convince Poland to compromise, or Germany would be forced to improve relations with Moscow<sup>63</sup> .

According to most researchers, it was the expansionist actions of Germany and Italy in March-April 1939 that marked the beginning of the pre-war political crisis, which forced England and France to start probing the position of the USSR<sup>64</sup>. M.L. Korobochkin points out that the departure from the Munich Agreement in German policy began as early as the autumn of 1938, and Germany's actions in the spring of 1939 required England to look for allies to curb German expansion, but not to wage war against it, since London wanted to solve this problem without the use of force<sup>65</sup>. In the literature, to varying degrees, it is recognized that since the spring of 1939, England and France began to deviate from the unequivocal line towards "appeasement" of Hitler. According to M.I. Semiryaga, since March 1939, England and France decided, without losing contact with Germany, to reach certain agreements with the USSR. Following Western historiography, the author believes that this was the "new course" of London and Paris, since guarantees were given to Poland and other countries of Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union was asked to conclude an agreement on cooperation.

On April 1, Moscow notified London that, since the question of a declaration had been dropped, "we consider ourselves free from any obligations." To the question whether the USSR intended to continue to help the victims of aggression, the answer was given, "that we may help in certain cases, but that we consider ourselves not bound by anything and will act in accordance with our interests" <sup>67</sup> . On April 4, orienting the Soviet plenipotentiary in Germany about the general principles of Soviet policy, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR M.M. Litvinov noted that "it is impossible to delay and stop aggression in Europe without us, and the later they turn to us for our help, the more we will be paid."<sup>68</sup> a unilateral commitment to defend Poland and Romania, believing that supporting these countries was in the Soviet interest. "But we ourselves will always be aware of our own interests and will do what they dictate to us. Why should we commit ourselves in advance, without deriving absolutely any benefit from these obligations?" conditions to adopt an anti-Soviet orientation.

On April 11, Germany undertook a sounding of the position of the USSR with a view to improving relations, but the Soviet side preferred to take a wait-and-see attitude. On the same day, England asked the USSR how it could help, if necessary, Romania. On April 14, France invited the USSR to exchange letters of mutual support in the event of a German attack on Poland and Romania on the basis of the 1935 Soviet-French Mutual Assistance Treaty. At the same time, Paris invited Moscow to make its own offer of cooperation. On the same day, England invited the USSR to declare support for its western neighbors in the event of an attack on them. On April 17, in response to the proposals of England and France, the USSR offered these countries to conclude a mutual assistance treaty. Having occupied the Czech Republic, Germany began to impede the fulfillment of Soviet military orders by Czech enterprises. The expression of a diplomatic protest by the Soviet Union on April 17 was used by the parties for mutual soundings. On April 25, France offered the USSR to undertake to help England and France in the event of their entry into the war and thereby secure Anglo-French support for themselves. On April 29, Paris clarified its proposal in the sense that in the event that England, France or the USSR enter the war with Germany, they undertake to help each other<sup>71</sup>. In the meantime, on April 26, London informally notified Berlin that the Soviet proposal would not be accepted<sup>72</sup>. In 1939, it was these April contacts between England,

France and the USSR that were considered the beginning of political negotiations between them. Now, however, the question of the initiator of the start of negotiations is presented in different ways, despite the fact that the authors do not always specify which



the events in question. Most researchers call the initiator of negotiations Soviet Union<sup>73</sup> and only a few - England<sup>74</sup> which is more fair, since based on relevant diplomatic documents. However, no one disputes the fact that it was the USSR that offered London and Paris an agreement on mutual assistance.

The goals of England and France in the course of the negotiations that have begun with the USSR do not cause domestic historiography of significant disagreements. Mainly reproduced official Soviet version, according to which England and France wanted to withdraw from their countries threat of war; to prevent a possible Soviet-German rapprochement; demonstrating rapprochement with the USSR, reach an agreement with Germany; draw in the Soviet Union into a future war and direct German aggression to the East<sup>75</sup> As a rule, it is noted that that England and France, trying to maintain the appearance of negotiations, at the same time did not want an equal union with the USSR<sup>76</sup> Now these estimates have been supplemented by an indication that France was interested in a military agreement and in general the West was more interested in an alliance with the USSR than the Soviet leadership - in an alliance with England and France<sup>77</sup>. True, such theses, borrowed from Western historiography, should have been proven. After all, the real policy of England and France, as O.V. Vishlev, only made it difficult to create a collective security system, since it demanded recognition of the equality of the USSR in European affairs. Such a concession did not attract London and Paris, who feared that in the event of a real anti-German coalition possible collapse of the Nazi regime in Germany and the fascist regime in Italy and "Bolshevization" these countries. Therefore, all these diplomatic steps of the Western allies were directed only to intimidate Germany and reach an agreement with her<sup>78</sup>.

The main discussion continues on the question of the goals of the USSR in these negotiations. How As a rule, it is believed that the Soviet leadership set three goals for its diplomacy main tasks: 1) prevent or 2) delay the war and 3) frustrate a possible unified anti-Soviet front M.I. Pankrashov, noting that England and France proceeded to their actions from the interest of the USSR in maintaining the "cordon sanitaire", indicates that the Soviet Union was interested in the elimination of this "cordon" (i.e. change in the status quo in Eastern Europe), since its western neighbors could, by in the author's opinion, to come to an agreement with Germany on an anti-Soviet basis. V.Ya. Sipols, on the other hand, completely rejects this version, stating that the USSR was interested in preserving state of affairs in Eastern Europe. If supporters of the official Soviet version believe that the strategic goal of the Soviet leadership in the summer of 1939 was to ensure security of the USSR in the conditions of the beginning crisis in Europe<sup>82</sup>, then their critics note that that Soviet foreign policy contributed to the clash between Germany and England and France, which was necessary for the success of the cause of expanding the zone of "socialism", since the outbreak of war in Europe opened the way to achieve a "world revolution"<sup>83</sup>. According to a number of authors, from March 1939 the USSR got the opportunity to choose with whom it to negotiate, and therefore, was not at all in international isolation, since in both Britain and France and Germany were interested in negotiations with him.

True, it should be remembered that for England and France following in its wake on negotiations with the USSR, it was primarily not about achieving a mutually acceptable agreement, but only about delaying negotiations, which could be used to put pressure on to Germany. With regard to Berlin, London and Paris either made formidable statements, or hinted at a readiness for an agreement, thereby convincing the German leadership that that it need not fear decisive action on their part. From 13.15 to 16.50 21 April, the Kremlin hosted a meeting on the problems of Soviet foreign policy in conditions of German soundings and Soviet proposals from England and France, materials which are still secret. May 3, when it became clear that England and France were not accepted the Soviet proposal, instead of Litvinov, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs was appointed V.M. Molotov, concurrently remaining the head of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR<sup>86</sup>.

Western countries did not react to this event, and Germany, making sure that Japan will not agree to a treaty directed against the Western powers, on May 5 announced satisfaction of the requirements of the USSR regarding the resumption of supplies from the Czech Republic. May 10 at Berlin, it was decided to intensify the soundings of the USSR, but during the contacts on May 9, 15 and 17 the Soviet side noted that it was on Berlin that the improvement of bilateral relations. On May 8, Moscow received an English response to the Soviet proposal. a tripartite pact in which the USSR was asked to help England and France if they will enter the war by virtue of their obligations towards Poland and Rumania. The British leadership, in assessing the Soviet proposal, proceeded from the fact that an alliance with The USSR would block the path to the Anglo-German agreement, which could lead to war, and this London sought to avoid, so the English proposal did not contain references to helping Moscow. On May 9-10, in response to Soviet proposals, Poland announced that will not agree to an alliance with Moscow<sup>87</sup> ·

On May 11, an editorial in the Izvestia newspaper analyzed the changes international situation in recent weeks. The newspaper claimed to stop the aggression only the union of England, France and the USSR can, but this position of the Soviet leadership is not finds support in London and Paris, who do not want an equal treaty with Moscow. The article stated that the USSR had no mutual assistance pacts with either England, neither with France (?!), nor with Poland<sup>88</sup> On May 14, the Soviet side again proposed an Anglo-French-Soviet alliance, the conclusion of a military convention and guarantees to small countries Central and Eastern Europe. On the same day, England unofficially proposed Germany to deepen economic negotiations. In general, over the past two and a half month, the policy of the Western allies towards Germany turned 180 degrees. If in March-April England and France made statements threatening Germany, then in in the first half of May, they only demonstrated calm confidence in their forces, and by the beginning of June they called on Berlin to negotiate<sup>90</sup>.

Meanwhile, on May 14-19, during the Franco-Polish negotiations on a military convention France tried to evade making firm commitments, but is forced to was to promise to support Warsaw in the event of a threat to Danzig and a German attack on Poland "to launch an offensive against Germany with the main forces of his army on the 15th day mobilization". True, the phrase about "automatic provision of military assistance by all branches of the armed forces"<sup>91</sup> Anglo-Polish negotiations on May 23-30 led to that London promised to provide Warsaw with 1,300 combat aircraft for the Polish Air Force and undertake aerial bombardment of Germany in case of war. It was notorious deception, since the Anglo-French command did not provide for any offensive operations in the west of Germany at all. Regular Anglo-French military negotiations showed that the allies were aware of Germany's offensive intentions in the East, but they do not know how long the war in Poland can drag on. English-French the leadership was afraid of the German Air Force, information about which was excessively inflated, and believed that the Allies were not ready for war with Germany, and therefore it would be better if the war in Poland continued as long as possible. Although the British military concluded that that guarantees provoke Germany to invade Poland, no measures to help her was not offered. Naturally, Warsaw was not informed of this<sup>92</sup> In mid-May, a ·

new multi-day conference was held in Moscow to discuss questions of Soviet foreign policy, the materials of which are still inaccessible to research. On May 20, the German side proposed to the USSR to resume economic negotiations, and the Soviet side hinted at the need to bring a "political base" under the Soviet-German relations, that is, offered Germany to contribute specific suggestions. On the same day, Berlin received from London information about the difficulties at the Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations, and France probed Germany's position on the subject of improving relations<sup>93</sup>. Therefore, on May 21, the German leadership decided not to rush things in Moscow. On May 24, England decided to keep negotiations for a while.

with the USSR, and on May 27 Moscow received new Anglo-French proposals providing for the conclusion of a mutual assistance treaty for 5 years, consultations if necessary, but mentioning the League of Nations. This move by England, in turn, prompted Germany on May 30 to again try to clarify in Moscow what the phrase "political base" means, but the Soviet side preferred to take a position of waiting<sup>94</sup>.

On May 7 it was initialed, and on May 22 the "Steel Pact" between Germany and Italy was signed. On May 23, speaking to the military, Hitler clearly outlined the main problem of German foreign policy - the desire to return to the number of "powerful states", which required expanding "living space", which was impossible "without invading foreign states or attacking someone else's property." Germany needed to create a food base in the East of Europe in case of further struggle with the West. Closely related to this problem was the question of the position of Poland, which was drawing closer to the West, could not serve as a serious barrier against Bolshevism, and was a traditional enemy of Germany. Therefore, it was necessary "at the first suitable opportunity to attack Poland", ensuring the neutrality of England and France. Further, Hitler made an overview of possible diplomatic combinations and expressed general considerations in the event of a war with the West, in which a general program was formulated for Germany to achieve hegemony in Europe<sup>95</sup>.

On May 31, at a session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Molotov's speech criticized the position of England and France in the negotiations, which, according to Moscow, only demonstrated concessions and did not want to give guarantees to the Baltic countries. Therefore, "it is not even possible to say yet whether these countries have a serious desire to abandon the policy of non-intervention, the policy of non-resistance to the further deployment of aggression. Will it not happen that the current desire of these countries to limit aggression in certain areas will not serve as a cover for unleashing aggression in other areas?" The USSR should have been careful not to let itself be drawn into the war. Under these conditions, Molotov noted, "we do not at all consider it necessary to renounce business ties" with Germany and Italy, it is possible that German-Soviet economic negotiations may be resumed<sup>96</sup> Thus, Moscow sought to put pressure on both England and France, and on Germany .

On June 2, Soviet-German economic contacts resumed, and the USSR handed England and France a new draft treaty. Estonia and Latvia spoke out against guarantees from England, France and the USSR, and on June 7 signed non-aggression pacts with Germany. On June 6-7, England and France spoke in favor of an agreement with the USSR, and on June 8 Germany obtained Moscow's consent to the resumption of economic negotiations. The Soviet side again hinted at the need to create a "political base", expecting that Germany would make a concrete proposal, but Berlin was in no hurry. On June 12, Moscow notified London that without guarantees to the Baltic countries, the USSR would not sign the treaty. On June 13, England probed Germany for talks on curtailing the arms race, an economic agreement and colonies. The next day, a new English project was handed over to the USSR, and Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations became more regular. On June 16, the USSR again demanded from England and France reciprocity and guarantees to the Baltic countries, or the conclusion of a simple tripartite treaty without guarantees to third countries<sup>98</sup>. On June 14, the Soviet plenipotentiary in Berlin, in a conversation with the Bulgarian ambassador, received information about those problems that Berlin would probably be ready to discuss with Moscow. Economic

contacts on June 17 and 25 ended in failure, as Germany considered the Soviet demands too high, and the USSR insisted on accepting their proposals. At the same time, it turned out that Germany was waiting for a response from the Soviet side to its previous soundings. On June 21, a new Anglo-French proposal from the USSR followed, in

the answer to which Moscow on June 22 again proposed to conclude a simple tripartite treaty with England and France, leaving its partners the right to choose. On June 26, the USSR learned from Italy about the existence of the "Schulenburg Plan", which assumed a phased improvement of Soviet-German relations on the basis of German assistance in the normalization of Soviet-Japanese relations, the conclusion of a non-aggression pact or guarantee of the Baltic states and the conclusion of a broad trade agreement<sup>99</sup> On June 27, England again probed Germany for negotiations. On June 28, Germany reiterated the need to normalize Soviet-German relations, but Moscow never heard concrete proposals, since Hitler forbade rushing things<sup>100</sup>.

On June 29, the Pravda newspaper published an article by Politburo member A.A. Zhdanov, which noted that the Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations "reached a dead end" because Britain and France "do not want an equal treaty with the USSR." It is London and Paris that are dragging out the negotiations, which "causes one to doubt the sincerity" of these countries, which do not want to give guarantees to the Baltic countries and seek to place "the full burden of obligations" on the USSR. Most likely, Britain and France want "only talk about a treaty" in order to make it easier for themselves to make a deal with the aggressor. Naturally, without taking into account the interests of the USSR, Moscow will not agree to a treaty, because "it does not want to be a toy in the hands of people who like to rake in the heat with the wrong hands"<sup>101</sup>. On the same day, in a speech by British Foreign Secretary Halifax, the idea was voiced of the possibility of negotiations with Germany on issues that "inspire alarm in the world." He referred to these issues as "the colonial problem, the question of raw materials, trade barriers, "living space", the limitation of armaments, and many other things that affect Europeans"

In June, Germany still did not receive a firm answer to the main question of what Britain and France would do in the event of a German-Polish war. In Berlin, they feared the British Air Force and the French army, which, if they intervened in the German-Polish war, could significantly complicate the position of Germany. In early June, Anglo-German contacts showed that London was in favor of a compromise and was afraid of the German Air Force, and Berlin was confident that its firm position influenced England in the right direction. On June 15, Berlin hinted to London that the British guarantees to Poland were provoking Germany to use force and should be withdrawn. At the end of June, information was received in Berlin that Britain was taking some measures to prepare for war, but the government did not want to fight, although it had significant armed forces, and there were no plans for major operations. Continuing the policy of isolating Poland in the international arena, the German leadership decided to carefully disguise its military preparations so as not to give England and France a reason to speed up military preparations. In June, during the next Anglo-French military negotiations, it was decided that the allies would not help Poland, would try to keep Italy from entering the war and would not launch counterattacks against Germany. In the course of the Anglo-Polish negotiations it became clear that England would not supply the latest equipment to Poland, and the loan requested by Warsaw was cut from 50 to 8 million pounds. Art. England's position was that Poland would receive no help, but that when the war was won, she would be compensated for the damage. Here we

should dwell briefly on the events that took place in the spring and summer of 1939 outside of Europe. Internal difficulties in the United States associated with the implementation of the New Deal policy required that public attention be diverted to international affairs. The outbreak of war in Europe was seen in Washington as a stimulus for the development of the American economy, so in the summer of 1939 the United States began preparing the economy for operations under wartime conditions. Closely following the events in Europe, where the threat of war was growing, the American leadership tried not to interfere in the course of events, limiting itself to general pacifist statements. The United States knew about the course of the German soundings of the USSR and informed England and France about this, which did not attach any importance to this information (apparently, this was how the information was compiled). London and Paris were not interested in general phrases from Washington, but in what kind

United States in the event of a war. On this issue, the American leadership took an evasive position. On the one hand, there were semi-secret Anglo-American and Franco-American contacts on the issues of obtaining American weapons, but on the other hand, the law on neutrality remained in force, which made it difficult for military purchases in the United States. Keeping the Neutrality Law unchanged objectively pushed the war in Europe, since Germany believed that the United States would not intervene for a long time. In the spring of 1939,

the Roosevelt administration, in an effort to ease its foreign policy activities, began to take some steps to prepare a revision of the Neutrality Act. However, supporters of the revision of the law acted indecisively, and after a stormy debate on June 30, the US House of Representatives voted against changing the neutrality law, and on July 11, the decision on this issue was postponed until the next session of Congress in January 1940. This, however, did not interfere with the administration and Congress. The United States is in full agreement to increase military appropriations and lend to Latin American countries, strengthening its position in the region. In addition, the American leadership promised England some assistance in the war with Germany and officially declared that the United States was able to protect the New World from any encroachment from outside. At the same time, the United States has repeatedly stated to England and France that they will consider new concessions on their part in favor of Germany and Italy as a threat to their national interests, with all the ensuing consequences for London and Paris, and vice versa, "in the event of unprovoked aggression, America will rush to the aid of England and France". Washington was well aware that the intransigence of Poland would lead to a crisis in which England would be forced to intervene, and the war in Europe would allow the United States to finally resolve the Anglo-American dispute over the prevailing influence in the world in its favor<sup>104</sup>. In the autumn of 1938, negotiations on a military-political treaty between Germany, Italy and Japan revived.

However, it soon became clear that the parties see the prospects for further expansion in different ways. Germany insisted that the treaty should have been directed both against the USSR and against England, France and the USA, while Japan believed that it should be an exclusively anti-Soviet alliance. In addition, Berlin was unhappy with the fact that Japan was in no hurry to provide Germany with certain economic advantages in China. The demands of Germany and Italy for the signing of the treaty they needed ran into Anglo-French-American diplomatic pressure on Tokyo. On May 4, Japan announced that it could not accept the German-Italian proposal at the moment. For its part, the United States declared to Britain that until an Anglo-French-Soviet treaty was concluded, there was no need to fear the creation of a German-Italian-Japanese bloc.

On May 11, fighting began at Khalkhin Gol, and at the end of May, Tokyo put forward the idea of convening a Pacific Conference with the participation of England, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States to discuss the problems of the Far East. Under the favorable attitude of Washington, Japan decided to put pressure on Britain, and in June 1939 Japanese-English relations became aggravated. The Anglo-Japanese negotiations that began on July 15 aroused the concern of the United States and France, which spoke out against broad Anglo-Japanese agreements, but London failed to confine itself to resolving the Tianjin issue. On July 24, the parties published the Arita-Craigie agreement on the recognition by England of Japanese seizures in China, thereby London violated the agreement of 9 powers. On June 13, the USSR provided China with a \$150 million loan, which contributed to the growth of Soviet popularity. This required counteraction from the United States, and on July 26 they announced the denunciation of the trade agreement with Japan from January 1, 1940, which was widely used by American propaganda to confirm the thesis of helping China and repel the aggressor. In this situation, Japan needed a victory at Khalkhin Gol, which was supposed to reinforce its authority and speed up the convening of the conference. Japanese troops were preparing an offensive on August 24, but on August 20, Soviet troops went on the offensive and by August 31, the Japanese

the group was destroyed. Already on August 25, Japan announced that in view of the Soviet-German pact, it was ending negotiations with Germany and Italy, the government resigned, and on August 26 it was decided to normalize relations with the United States<sup>105</sup>

But all this will be a little later, but for now, in the course of negotiations with the USSR, England and France on July 1 agreed to give guarantees to the Baltic countries, proposed to transfer the list of guaranteed powers to a secret protocol and gave their own formulation of "indirect aggression." On the same day, Moscow hinted to Berlin that "nothing prevents Germany from proving the seriousness of its desire to improve its relations with the USSR."<sup>106</sup> wording "indirect aggression". On the same day, Berlin invited Moscow to agree on the future fate of Poland and Lithuania. On July 4, the USSR informed Italy that it would agree to an agreement with England and France only when they accepted all our conditions, and reiterated that "there is nothing to prevent the German government from demonstrating in practice the seriousness and sincerity of its desire to improve relations with the USSR"<sup>107</sup> 7 On July 10, Germany decided to resume economic contacts with the USSR on Soviet terms, which was announced to Moscow on July 10. On July 8, Britain and France noted that the treaty was generally agreed upon, but a discussion began on the Soviet definition of "indirect aggression", which was further expanded on July 9. On July 10, England decided that it was necessary to try to reach a compromise with the USSR on the basis of mutual concessions, but "to ensure a free hand so that we can tell Russia that we are not obliged to enter the war, since we do not agree with her interpretation of the facts." During the talks, it became clear that Moscow is not making concessions, but is waiting for agreement with its position. In addition, the USSR insisted on the simultaneous conclusion of a political treaty and a military convention, although it agreed to initialing the treaty<sup>108</sup>.

Fearing an Anglo-German-Japanese conspiracy, the USSR made concessions in the economic negotiations, which resumed in Berlin on July 18. On July 19, the British leadership decided never to recognize the Soviet formulation of "indirect aggression" but to enter into military negotiations in order to hinder Soviet-German contacts and strengthen England's position with regard to Germany. It was believed that military negotiations would prevent a Soviet-German rapprochement and delay the time until autumn, when Germany, due to weather conditions, did not dare to start a war. France was more cautious about military negotiations before a political agreement was reached. In addition, both London and Paris knew that Poland and Romania were categorically opposed to the passage of the Red Army through their territory. As a result, London postponed the solution of this issue for the time being, discussing whether to interrupt negotiations with the USSR altogether. Fulfilling the task of isolating Poland, Germany on July 22 decided to resume political soundings of the USSR, which on the same day announced the resumption of economic negotiations with Berlin. In turn, England and France, stating that "they have already reached sufficient agreement on the main issues to proceed to the study of specific military problems," on July 23 agreed to the military negotiations proposed by Moscow, of which they notified it on July 25<sup>109</sup> In

the spring - summer of 1939 Britain and France again tried to find an acceptable basis for an agreement with Germany, using the threat of rapprochement with the USSR to put pressure on Berlin. However, it was quite obvious that they were not eager to have Moscow as an equal partner - this completely contradicted their foreign policy strategy. It was no coincidence that at the end of July England informed Germany that negotiations with other countries "are only a reserve means for a genuine reconciliation with Germany and that these ties will disappear as soon as the only important and worthy of effort goal - an agreement with Germany" is really achieved. It is clear that under these conditions, as the talks in Moscow showed, Britain and France were not going to agree that the Soviet Union, along with them, would have the right to determine when Germany acts as an aggressor. This is precisely the reason for the fruitless discussion on the question of the definition

"indirect aggression". As a result of mutual suspicion and intransigence of the parties, the Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations actually failed by mid-July. In the

meantime, on July 17-19, Poland was visited by the English General W. Ironside, who was convinced that she would not be able to resist the German offensive for a long time. These conclusions did not change London's position on Warsaw, but they probably pushed towards agreeing to military negotiations with Moscow. In the course of unofficial contacts with England, Germany, blackmailing London with the threat of war, demanded recognition of itself as a world power and a solution to the question of Danzig. On July 8, Germany agreed to a secret meeting with the British, and on July 22-25, an agreement was reached on an informal meeting in Schleswig. On July 10, it became known in Berlin that the British public demanded action, but the government was pursuing a course of compromise with Germany. This conclusion was confirmed by the conversations of G. Wohlthat with R. Hudson and G. Wilson on July 18, 20-21, during which England proposed to Germany a broad program of political (renunciation of aggression in international affairs, mutual non-intervention), economic (issues of supply of raw materials, trade, monetary policy and colonies) and military (mutual arms limitation) cooperation, which would achieve the main goal of the British leadership - to appease Germany and ensure stability in Europe in the context of consolidating the interests of England, France, Germany and Italy<sup>111</sup> It is clear that against the backdrop of such generous British

proposals for compromise London's statements of support for Poland in the event of war were not taken seriously in Berlin. In the course of mutual soundings in the second half of July, Germany proposed to England the division of spheres of influence in the world, demanded the return of the colonies and the abolition of the Treaty of Versailles, also demonstrating its readiness for negotiations. But on July 21, France found out about these contacts and, fearing an Anglo-German rapprochement at its own expense, passed this information to the press. The publications that appeared on July 24 did not add to the confidence of England on the part of its partners. Despite the hype in the press, on July 29, England again unofficially proposed to Germany the division of "spheres of interest" and non-interference in each other's affairs. For its part, England would stop negotiations with the USSR, and Germany would agree to cooperation with England, France and Italy, granting autonomy to the Protectorate and to a general reduction in armaments. In the course of Franco-German correspondence in July 1939, France repeatedly stated that it would support Poland in the event of an attack on it, but at the same time confidentially informed Germany that these statements were intended only to reassure the French and Polish public<sup>113</sup>.

On July 24, Germany once again probed the USSR, offering to take into account Soviet interests in the Baltic states and Romania in exchange for Moscow's refusal of an agreement with England. On July 26, Germany offered the USSR to coordinate interests in Eastern Europe. On July 27, England, France and the USSR agreed on a preparatory period for military negotiations of 8-10 days, but a compromise formula for "indirect aggression" was never found, and the USSR refused to publish a communiqué on agreeing on a political treaty. On July 29, Moscow spoke in favor of improving relations with Germany and wished to learn more about the German proposals. Germany, fearing an unfavorable outcome of the military negotiations in Moscow, increased the stakes, thinking about the division of Poland and the Baltic states.

Russian historiography proceeds from the idea that the Anglo-French-Soviet alliance would have prevented the outbreak of the Second World War, although this thesis is quite debatable, since it does not take into account at all that the Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations were only one of the sides of the events of 1939. The desire to whitewash the Soviet foreign policy leads to the fact that the majority of domestic authors lay the blame for the breakdown of negotiations on England, France and Poland. In this case, the main responsibility lies with England,<sup>115</sup> which conducted secret negotiations with Germany, although it is now known that Germany, the USSR, England, and France conducted secret and open negotiations among themselves.

A number of authors point out that during the negotiations, England and France, underestimating Soviet armed forces had to take into account the anti-Soviet position of their neighbors THE USSR. In addition, the mutual distrust of England and the Soviet Union, which afraid of being deceived by each other. England did not want to make a promise not to conclude separate peace in the event of war, because she did not believe in the activity of the Soviet armed forces in a future war. The USSR, in turn, was against the mention in the treaty of the League of Nations, because he was afraid of delaying assistance in the event of an attack on him<sup>117</sup> All this could not but affect the outcome of the negotiations. Moreover, some researchers believe that England, neither France, nor the USSR were interested in an alliance<sup>119</sup> According to S.V. Volkov and Yu.V. Emelyanov, the Soviet leadership had two alternatives: an alliance against Germany or an agreement with her. Both of these options, in their opinion, gave the future of the country in the wrong hands, but there was no other way out<sup>120</sup> The fact that the Soviet Union they tried to drag them into the war and use them in the interests of the West, write D.A. Volkogonov and V.M. Falin, without explaining why, in this case, the Soviet leadership went to negotiations and "persistently" sought this union<sup>121</sup> M.L. .

Korobochkin points out that the nomination by the Soviet leadership of an expanded formulations of "indirect aggression" at a time when the political treaty was almost fully agreed, and his stubborn unwillingness to compromise on this issue, despite concessions from England, practically thwarted the achievement of an agreement. The USSR did not want to accept a communiqué on the settlement of the main provisions of the treaty, and consequently, the author notes, the treaty hung in the air. Thus the point of crisis in negotiations should be considered the promotion of the Soviet formulation of "indirect aggression", which was not in accordance with international law and was completely unacceptable to West. Considering the policy of England, Korobochkin notes that, while maintaining the possibility agreements with Germany, London made its policy suspicious for partners, but the British government itself has determined for itself a clear limit of possible concessions - threat to Poland's independence. At the same time, M.L. Korobochkin, the threat of a Soviet-German rapprochement and the persistent demands of France forced England to accept Soviet proposal for military negotiations, which, however, due to the disruption of political negotiations were just a waste of time.

Forced to agree to military negotiations pending the conclusion political treaty, England and France sought to use these negotiations to further pressure on Berlin by the threat of an Anglo-French-Soviet alliance in order to him to compromise. It is no coincidence that the composition of the Anglo-French military delegations was not too representative, and their instructions provided that "until the conclusion political agreement, the delegation must ... negotiate very slowly, following political negotiations."<sup>123</sup> Still hoping to reach an agreement with Germany, the British government did not want, as a result of negotiations with the USSR, "to be involved in any definite obligation that might bind us hands under any circumstances. Therefore, with regard to a military agreement, strive to be limited to as general as possible wording."<sup>124</sup> It is no coincidence that the French delegation had authority only to negotiations, and the British delegation had no written authority at all<sup>125</sup> Thus, for the Anglo-French side, it was a question of conducting fruitless negotiations, which it was desirable to drag out for as long as possible, which, in the opinion of London and Paris, keep Germany from starting a war in 1939 and make it difficult Soviet-German rapprochement.

For its part, the Soviet leadership, being generally aware of such intentions of the Anglo-French leadership, appointed a representative military delegation with all possible powers. Options have been developed military agreement that could be safely offered to partners without fear that they will be accepted. On August 7, a clear "scenario" was developed for the conduct of military



negotiations. First of all, it was necessary to find out the powers of the parties "to sign a military convention." "If they do not have the authority to sign the convention, express surprise, shrug their shoulders and 'respectfully' ask for what purposes the government sent them to the USSR. If they answer that they were sent for negotiations," then their views on joint actions should be clarified England, France and the USSR in the war. If the negotiations do start, they should have been "reduced to a discussion on certain fundamental issues, mainly about the passage of our troops through the Vilna corridor and Galicia, as well as through Romania", putting forward this issue as a condition for signing a military convention. In addition, it was necessary to reject any attempts by the Anglo-French delegations to get acquainted with the defense enterprises of the USSR and the military units of the Red Army<sup>126</sup>. It is clear that under these conditions the military negotiations were doomed to failure and were used by the parties to put pressure on Germany.

In the meantime, on August 2-3, Germany again offered to improve relations with the USSR on the basis of delimiting the interests of the parties in Eastern Europe, but declined to make a specific proposal, waiting for the USSR to agree to discuss these problems. According to Berlin, it was necessary to go through several stages: conclude an economic agreement, expand cultural and scientific exchange and move on to friendly political relations. Moscow generally approved of these ideas and on August 4 agreed to continue the exchange of views with Germany, but before that an economic treaty had to be signed. On August 2, at negotiations with Britain and France, the USSR reaffirmed its unchanged position on "indirect aggression", and on August 7, Strang left Moscow, which meant the end of political negotiations. On August 8-10, the USSR received information that Germany's interests extended to Lithuania, Western Poland, Romania without Bessarabia, but, in the event of an agreement with Berlin, Moscow would have to abandon the agreement with England and France. On August 11, the Soviet leadership agreed to gradual negotiations on these issues in Moscow. On the same day, military missions from England and France arrived in the USSR, at negotiations with which on August 14 the question of the passage of the Red Army through Poland and Romania was raised, and on August 17 the negotiations were interrupted. On August 13, Germany notified the USSR that it agreed to conduct negotiations in Moscow, but asked .

to speed up their start. At the same time, Germany was supposed to take the lead in preventing a new round. This was London's most generous offer, opening up tensions in Europe<sup>128</sup>. Germany had wide prospects, which, moreover, reinforced the opinion in Berlin that England would not come out in support of Poland. In Berlin, this proposal was discussed for a long time, but, considering that this was most likely an English bluff in order to buy time, on August 20 Germany refused to consider such a broad proposal until the Danzig issue was resolved, which, as London was told, was the "last demand" on revision of the Treaty of Versailles. In addition, England was told that "after the settlement of the Danzig question, Hitler intends to put forward proposals for a general settlement in which he intends to go as far as possible to satisfy the desires of England. Hitler will be ready to offer England an alliance." Goering On August 7, a proposal was made to London with British businessmen to come to an agreement on the basis of the recognition of German interests in the East<sup>130</sup>.

On August 9, England notified Germany that the cessation of Berlin's unilateral actions in Europe would lead to a calming of public opinion, which would allow "discussing the problems of appeasement. The British Government has the keenest desire that this time will come, and then it will go very far to achieve this goal"<sup>131</sup> . On August 11, soundings were resumed through the Commissioner of the League of Nations in Danzig, K. Burkhard, who met with Hitler with the consent of England, France and Poland, who declared that Polish provocations forced him to use force at the right moment, that the German

The Air Force is the strongest in Europe and that Germany demands living space in the East. She wants peace with England and negotiations, but without the participation of France. If the West interferes with the campaign in the USSR, then Germany will have to defeat it in the first place. Having received this information, England began to expect further German proposals, which never came, since Hitler's stake on the war blocked many of London's proposals

that were beneficial to Germany. A new unofficial English proposal, received in Berlin on August 14, provided for the division of spheres of interest (Germany - Eastern Europe, England - her empire), the solution of the colonial question, a pan-European settlement, mutual disarmament; for this, Germany must stop supporting Spain, give autonomy to the Protectorate, and renounce independent expansion. to this" 134 . On August 16, the British Air Ministry informally informed Germany that it was possible that England would declare war, but no military action would be taken if Germany quickly defeated Poland and the British Air Force did not bomb undefended cities. All these British soundings strengthened the German leadership's confidence that England was not yet ready for war, and in these conditions one should not tie one's hands with an agreement with England, but fight with her.

At this time, England and France were still not sure that Germany would go to war with Poland. On August 18-20, Poland, which categorically rejected cooperation with the USSR, was ready to negotiate with Germany to discuss the German terms of a territorial settlement, but Berlin, which had headed for war, was no longer interested in a peaceful solution to the issue. England was also not satisfied with the prospect of Poland joining the German camp. As a result, the German-Polish negotiations did not take place.<sup>136</sup> On .

August 15, Germany submitted broad proposals to Moscow and raised the question of the arrival of Foreign Minister I. Ribbentrop in Moscow. The USSR invited Germany to discuss the problems of guarantees for the Baltic countries, the normalization of Soviet-Japanese relations and the non-aggression pact. On August 17-19, England and France clarified Poland's position regarding the passage of the Red Army and tried to get its consent, but Warsaw remained unconvinced. On August 17, Germany accepted all the proposals of the USSR and again offered to speed up the negotiations by Ribbentrop's visit to Moscow. Taking into account this statement by Germany, the USSR proposed to first sign an economic treaty, and then agree on a pact and a protocol. On August 19, Germany announced its agreement "to take into account everything that the USSR wishes" and again insisted on speeding up the negotiations. The Soviet side insisted on a gradual development of events, handed over to Berlin a draft non-aggression pact and agreed to the arrival of Ribbentrop on August 26-27. On the same day, the Soviet-German economic agreement was signed, which was reported in the press, since by doing so the parties tried to put pressure on England and France<sup>137</sup>.

Soviet sources covering the mood in the Kremlin on the eve of the conclusion of the non-aggression pact with Germany, unfortunately, are still inaccessible to researchers. The more important is the publication of T.S. Bushuyeva's French recording of Stalin's speech to members of the Politburo on August 19, 1939.<sup>138</sup> Unfortunately, the question of the authenticity of this document has not become a subject of discussion in Russian historiography, but the fact that its content corresponds with other recently declassified Soviet documents of this period allows using this publication as apocrypha.

Assessing the current situation, Stalin stated that "the question of peace or war is entering a critical phase for us. If we conclude a mutual assistance treaty with France and England, then Germany will abandon Poland and begin to seek a "modus vivendi" with the Western powers. War will be prevented but in the future events may take on a dangerous character for the USSR. If we accept Germany's proposal to conclude a non-aggression pact with her, she will, of course, attack Poland, and the intervention of France and England in

this war will become inevitable. Under these conditions, we will have many chances to stay away from the conflict, and we will be able to hope for our advantageous entry into the war. "The outbreak of war in Europe opens up for the USSR" a wide field of activity for the development of the world revolution. "Therefore," in the interests of the USSR so that war breaks out between the Reich and the capitalist Anglo-French bloc. Everything must be done to make this war last as long as possible in order to exhaust the two sides. It is for this reason that we must agree to the conclusion of the pact proposed by Germany and work to ensure that this war, declared once, lasts for the maximum amount of time.

On August 21, at 11 o'clock, the last meeting of the Anglo-French-Soviet military negotiations began, during which it became clear that the negotiations had reached an impasse. At 3 p.m., Schulenburg handed over to Molotov a telegram from Hitler to "Mr. I.V. Stalin", in which the Fuhrer announced his agreement with the Soviet draft non-aggression pact and his readiness to work out an "additional protocol" during the visit to Moscow of a "responsible statesman of Germany". Referring to the threat of a German-Polish crisis, Hitler offered to "receive my Foreign Minister on Tuesday, August 22, but no later than Wednesday, August 23. The Foreign Minister has comprehensive and unlimited powers to draw up and sign both a non-aggression pact and protocol". At 5 p.m., Molotov conveyed to Schulenburg Stalin's reply to "the Reich Chancellor of Germany, Mr. A. Hitler" with a message about the consent of the Soviet government "to the arrival of Mr. Ribbentrop in Moscow on August 23." Nevertheless, negotiations with England and France were not formally interrupted. On August 22, the Soviet press reported on Ribbentrop's forthcoming visit to Moscow to conclude a non-aggression pact, while the USSR informed Britain and France that "negotiations on non-aggression with Germany could in no way interrupt or slow down the Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations"<sup>140</sup>. On the same day, France again tried to get Poland's consent to the passage of the Red Army in order to be able to limit the significance of the future Soviet-German pact or frustrate its signing<sup>141</sup>. At the same time, the head of the French military mission received the authority to sign a military convention and tried on August 22 to insist on continuing military negotiations with the USSR. However, the head of the Soviet military mission, referring to the fact that "the position of Poland, Romania, England is unknown," suggested not to hurry with the continuation of negotiations<sup>142</sup>.

On August 23, Ribbentrop arrived in Moscow, and in the course of negotiations with Stalin and Molotov, on the night of August 24, a Soviet-German non-aggression pact and a secret additional protocol were signed that determined the areas of interest of the parties in Eastern Europe. Finland, Estonia, Latvia, the territory of Poland east of the rivers Narew, Vistula and San, as well as Bessarabia<sup>143</sup> were assigned to the sphere of interests of the USSR. At the end of the conversation between the parties, who briefly discussed a number of international issues, Stalin told Ribbentrop that "the Soviet government takes the new pact very seriously. It can give its word of honor that the Soviet Union will never betray its partner"<sup>144</sup>. Then a reception was held in the Catherine's Hall of the Kremlin. Ribbentrop, entering the hall, greeted those present with the usual fascist gesture - throwing forward his outstretched hand with the exclamation "Heil Hitler!" Everyone froze. But Stalin smiled and unexpectedly answered ... with a curtsy. Grasping the edges of his jacket with his fingers, he sat down picturesquely in front of the guest. There was laughter in the hall, and the awkwardness of the situation was smoothed out. When the reception ended, Ribbentrop left the premises and only his own people remained, Stalin said: "It seems we

managed to get them through."<sup>145</sup> Having signed the non-aggression pact, the USSR on August 24 sent missions that, in the changed situation, military negotiations "lose all meaning."<sup>146</sup> True, on the same day, France was informed that the 1935 treaty was still in force, and political negotiations with Britain and France could be continued. The Soviet leadership was ready to consider any proposals from England and France, if they

agree to Soviet conditions, but London and Paris decided not to make concessions to the USSR, who, secretly from them, dared to prefer some of his own interests to "common cause" defense of Western democracies, and on the night of August 26 their military missions left Moscow<sup>147</sup>.

The conclusion of the Soviet-German non-aggression pact is one of the key Russian historiography of the events of 1939, which in recent years has been enriched significant amount of new research. Reasons remain at the center of the debate. consent of the Soviet leadership to the signing of an agreement with Germany. Supporters official Soviet version of the events of 1939, they try to prove that the pact is forced move by Moscow. To prove this thesis, the literature provides various options for possible actions of the Soviet leadership, which should confirm that there was no other alternative than the pact<sup>148</sup> More critically minded researchers, referring to their set of possible alternative steps Moscow<sup>149</sup>, believe that Stalin's decision to sign an agreement with Germany was miscalculation. But based on the goals they indicated, which were pursued by the Soviet management, it was not a miscalculation at all, but a desired result for him. Therefore, some the authors consider the pact a success for the Soviet leadership, which was able to achieve its goals<sup>150</sup>.

It is curious to note that a number of authors who criticize Stalin for agreeing to sign pact, at the same time they write that Moscow pursued a "course of rapprochement with Germany." According to them opinion, this "course" was taken by the Soviet leadership after Munich<sup>151</sup> from the end of 1938 <sup>152</sup> from March 1939 <sup>153</sup> or from May 1939 <sup>154</sup>. Published Soviet diplomatic documents made it possible to establish that the consent to negotiations with Germany was Soviet the leadership gave August 3-4, reaffirming it on August 11-12, 1939, but the final the decision to conclude the pact was taken on August 19-21<sup>155</sup>. available historians, the documents testify not so much to the presence in Moscow of a "pro-German" or "pro-English" course, how much about the desire of the Soviet leadership to use contradictions between other great powers to increase their influence in the world. The growing tension in relations between England and Germany led to the fact that both these countries were interested in the benevolent position of the USSR, and forced them to go concessions to Moscow. This required a cautious foreign policy course, responding flexibly to changes in the international situation. In this sense, the Soviet The foreign policy of 1939 provides an excellent example of such maneuvering in one's own interests.

Discussion continues on the question of Germany's interest in concluding pact with the USSR. So, A.N. Yakovlev believes that Germany was not too keen on an agreement with the USSR, as she could choose between an agreement with him or with England. Wherein the author notes the lack of study of the question of Germany's readiness for war with the Soviet Union in 1939.<sup>156</sup> According to a number of authors, in the summer of 1939 Germany was in a very difficult position, because it sought to achieve foreign political isolation of Poland in the upcoming war and receive a guarantee from a war on two fronts, which means that there was interested in the pact more than the Soviet Union, which is why she was the initiator of an agreement with the USSR, for a war with which she was not ready<sup>157</sup> G.N. Sevostyanov, who believes that Germany was ready for war with the USSR, but cites data in confirmation that, at a minimum, call this statement into question<sup>158</sup> Most authors note the unwillingness USSR to war with Germany in 1939, which is explained by repressions in the Red Army or just a "weakness" of the Red Army<sup>159</sup> Only O.F. Suvenirov spoke in the sense that the Red Army was stronger than the Wehrmacht in 1939,<sup>160</sup> but this thesis was not supported. Absence comparative analysis of the armed forces of the great powers in the summer of 1939 does not allow unequivocally resolve this issue, however, the data in Table 4 show that the USSR had sufficiently powerful ground army. Some authors are overly optimistic

believe that for the USSR there was no threat of a united anti-Soviet front, a war with Germany or on two fronts, since inter-imperialist contradictions between other the great powers hindered any anti-Soviet agreement<sup>161</sup>

In Russian historiography, discord remains on the issue of assessments of the pact about non-aggression. Official historiography continues to emphasize the fact that he was the only correct step, which showed the peacefulness of the USSR and put a barrier on the path of German aggression to the East<sup>163</sup> The Pact was a compromise between the aggressor and his sacrifice and did not contradict the alliance with England and France, which already had the same agreements with Germany. It is compared with Tilsit and Brest, it is emphasized legal validity<sup>165</sup>. A.S. Yakushevsky claims that the pact was not sent against the interests of any third state and consistent with the principles proletarian international internationalism, class interests communist movement. V.Ya. Sipols<sup>167</sup> assesses the pact as far-sighted and a wise move, while recognizing that the Soviet government was aware of the impossibility rely on this agreement (?!). O.A. Chubaryan believes that the pact did not go beyond agreements of the same type, but Stalinism interpreted it in its own way<sup>168</sup>. However, some the authors believe that the pact was a "serious miscalculation of Soviet" diplomacy, since had a "negative impact on the development of international political and military events in Europe" in 1939-1941, is not comparable with the Anglo-German and Franco-German declarations of non-aggression and went beyond the scope of the non-aggression pact, and was also incompatible with the Anglo-French-Soviet Union<sup>169</sup> During

the discussion of the late 1980s. about the presence of a secret additional protocol, ended with the publication of the originals of this document in 1993, was concluded that the protocol was a natural continuation of the pact, in which and contained all its meaning<sup>170</sup>, which consisted in protecting part of Eastern Europe from German occupation. The study of Soviet diplomatic documents showed the correctness those authors who believe that the secret protocol was an initiative of the USSR and a concession from side of Germany. The purpose of the pact was to ensure the influence of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe, and without a secret protocol it is not needed and does not make sense<sup>172</sup> Although the protocol was not a legal basis for the redrawing of Eastern European borders, it predetermined the fate of third countries and testifies to cooperation with Germany in the redistribution of Eastern Europe<sup>173</sup>. Moreover, as S.Z. Case, for Stalin the border of the "sphere of interest" meant the future border of the USSR<sup>174</sup> According to V.Ya. Sipols, the pact reflected the mutual interests of Germany and the USSR. The first one was interested in occupation of Poland to the "line of 4 rivers", and the second - in stopping the Wehrmacht further from their borders and in the annexation of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus<sup>175</sup>.

However, it should be remembered that no real territorial changes or The Soviet-German treaty did not provide for the occupation of "spheres of interest"<sup>176</sup>. In this and is its fundamental difference from the Munich Agreement, which directly transferred to Germany the border regions of Czechoslovakia. Unfortunately, now knowing further events, some researchers are inclined to believe that Hitler and Stalin already then, on the night of August 24, they knew in advance what exactly would happen in the next 38 days. Naturally, this was not the case in reality. In general, the situation at the end of August 1939 was so confused that politicians and diplomats of all countries, including the Soviet Union, tried to sign the most vague agreements, which in depending on the situation could be interpreted in any way. Moreover, August 24 no one knew whether a German-Polish war would break out at all or if some kind of compromise, as was the case in 1938. In this situation, the term "territorial-political reorganization" of Poland and the Baltic States could also be interpreted as a variant of the new Munich, then would allow Moscow to declare its interests at a possible international conferences. And the concept of "sphere of interest" in general could be interpreted in any way<sup>177</sup>.

Thus, the Soviet-German pact was an agreement designed for any situation.

And here is the opinion of one of the participants in the events, W. Churchill, expressed by him in his memoirs, written at the beginning of the Cold War, to the emergence of which he was directly involved. Never hiding his anti-communist convictions, Churchill, however, does not share the now popular version of the predestined Soviet-German pact. "It is impossible to say," writes Churchill, "whom he inspired more disgust - Hitler or Stalin. Both realized that this could only be a temporary measure dictated by circumstances. The antagonism between the two empires and systems was deadly. Stalin, no doubt, thought that "Hitler will be a less dangerous enemy for Russia after a year of war against the Western powers. Hitler followed his 'one by one' method. The fact that such an agreement was possible marks the depth of the failure of British and French diplomacy in a few years." Further, Churchill, pointing out the vital need for the USSR to improve its strategic positions on the eve of the war with Germany, writes things that are completely "seditious" from the current positions: "They (the Soviets) needed to occupy the Baltic states and most of Poland by force or deceit, before they will be attacked. If their policy was coldly calculating, it was also at that moment highly realistic"<sup>178</sup> - that is, corresponded to the real state of affairs. From this statement, by the way, it follows that if Churchill had been in Stalin's place, he would have acted

similar.

Speaking at a session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on the issue of ratifying the non-aggression pact, Molotov rather frankly assessed its significance: "This treaty (as well as the Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations that ended in failure) shows that it is now impossible to resolve important issues of international relations - especially questions Eastern Europe - without the active participation of the Soviet Union, that any attempts to bypass the Soviet Union and solve such issues behind the back of the Soviet Union must end in failure. The Soviet-German non-aggression pact marks a turn in the development of Europe ... This treaty not only gives us the elimination of the threat of war with Germany ... - it must provide us with new opportunities (highlighted by me. M.M.) for the growth of forces, the strengthening of our positions, the further growth of the influence of the Soviet Union on international development "<sup>179</sup>.

In recent years, the consequences of the non-aggression pact have become the subject of heated debate. As achievements of the USSR, the theses of the official Soviet version about postponing the war with Germany, disrupting a possible anti-Soviet united front and eliminating the threat of war on two fronts by the USSR due to the deterioration of German-Japanese relations<sup>180</sup> are reproduced. A number of authors note that by concluding the pact, the USSR came out of international isolation and showed that it was capable of conducting an independent external one, as if this had not been the case before. Only V.M. Kulish and V.Ya. Sipols dispute in 1939 the policy<sup>182</sup>, the version of postponing the war with Germany, pointing out that Germany was not going to attack the USSR and subsequently was busy seizing Europe, which does not allow us to talk about postponing the war<sup>183</sup>

The literature often points to such an achievement of the pact as the establishment of new borders of the USSR, which were pushed back, the Wehrmacht was stopped away from them (?!), and a number of countries neighboring the Soviet Union were not captured by Germany<sup>184</sup>. According to M.I. Semiryaga, the question of whether it was beneficial to move the Soviet borders to the West has not been resolved, and a number of authors talk about the development of defense on the front lines<sup>185</sup>. Some authors point out the ambiguous reaction of German military circles to the pact, and especially to the limitation of the sphere of occupation of Poland, and the importance of economic supplies from Germany for the Soviet economy<sup>186</sup> Now, references to the negative consequences of the pact have appeared in Russian historiography. These include the disorientation of anti-fascist forces and the strengthening of anti-Soviet tendencies in the West, the curtailment

anti-fascist propaganda, Germany gaining freedom of maneuver in Europe, supplying Germany with Soviet raw materials and food, blunting vigilance against Germany, lowering the international prestige of the USSR, and even trampling on the "Leninist norms" of foreign policy and the "pro-fascist sympathies" of the Stalinist leadership<sup>187</sup>. In addition, according to V.I. Dashichev, the USSR found itself in international isolation by the summer of 1941<sup>188</sup>.

Apparently, the discussion on this issue will not end soon. However, it can already be said now that, thanks to the agreement with Germany, the USSR for the first time in its history received recognition of its interests in Eastern Europe from the side of a great European power. Moscow managed to limit the possibility of Germany's diplomatic maneuvering in relation to England and Japan, which largely reduced the threat for the USSR of a pan-European consolidation on an anti-Soviet basis and a major conflict in the Far East, where at that time there were battles at Khalkhin Gol with Japanese troops. As Molotov recalled much later, "Stalin was a major tactician. After all, Hitler signed a non-aggression pact with us without agreement with Japan! Stalin forced him to do this. Japan after that was very offended by Germany, and nothing really came of their alliance"<sup>189</sup>. Of course, for this, Moscow had to take upon itself the obligation to abandon anti-German actions in the event of a German-Polish war, expand economic contacts with Germany and curtail anti-fascist propaganda. But, as we shall see later, the last two concessions had their limits.

An important problem in the historiography of the events of 1939 is the question of the connection between the Soviet-German pact and the outbreak of World War II. Researchers are divided on this issue. Many authors, following Western historiography, which is based on the position of the British leadership formulated on August 30, 1939, that "the fate of war and peace is now in the hands of the USSR" and its intervention can prevent war<sup>190</sup>, believe that the pact contributed to the outbreak of World War II<sup>191</sup>. According to others, the pact had no effect on the start of the German-Polish war (and World War II too), since it was planned as early as April 1939.<sup>192</sup> R.A. Medvedev even believes that the pact forced Britain and France to declare war on Germany,<sup>193</sup> without, however, arguing this thesis. In order to give a reasoned answer to this, probably the most important question, one should turn to the consideration of the events that took place from August 23 to September 1 in Europe.

In August 1939, the question of clarifying the position of Britain and the USSR in the event of a war in Poland entered a decisive phase for Germany. August 2-3 Germany actively probed Moscow, August 7 - London, August 10 - Moscow, August 11 - London, August 14-15 - Moscow. On August 21, London was asked to accept Goering for negotiations on August 23, and Ribbentrop to Moscow for signing a non-aggression pact. Both the USSR and England agreed! Based on the need, first of all, to sign an agreement with the USSR, on August 22, Hitler canceled Goering's flight, although this was reported to London only on August 24. In the meantime, the British leadership, fearing to disrupt Goering's visit, banned the mobilization. Hitler's choice can be explained by a number of factors. Firstly, the German command was confident that the Wehrmacht was able to defeat Poland, even if it was supported by England and France. Whereas the performance of the USSR on the side of the anti-German coalition meant a catastrophe. Secondly, the agreement with Moscow was supposed to localize the German-Polish war, keep England and France from interfering, and give Germany the opportunity to resist the likely economic blockade of the Western powers. Thirdly, the subjective moment also played an important role: England too often made concessions to Germany, and in Berlin, apparently, they got used to this to a certain extent. The USSR, on the contrary, was too uncompromising, and the readiness for an agreement expressed by Moscow should have been used without delay. In addition, this would finally bury the already not very successful Anglo-French-Soviet military negotiations.

On August 22, Hitler again spoke to the military. Outlining the general political situation, he concluded that the situation was favorable to Germany, the intervention

England and France are unlikely to enter into a German-Polish conflict, they will not be able to help Poland, and an agreement will be concluded with the USSR, which will also reduce the threat of an economic blockade of Germany. Under these conditions, it is worth taking a risk and defeating Poland, while at the same time holding back the West. At the same time, it was necessary to quickly defeat the Polish troops, since "the destruction of Poland remains in the foreground, even if a war breaks out in the West"<sup>194</sup>. Busy with the localization of the campaign in Poland, Hitler considered the "agreement (with the USSR) as a reasonable deal. In relation to Stalin, of course, one must always be on the alert, but at the moment he (Hitler) sees in the pact with Stalin a chance to turn England off from the conflict with Poland"<sup>195</sup>. Confident that he would succeed, Hitler in the morning of August 23, when Ribbentrop was still flying to

Moscow, ordered an attack on Poland at 4.30 am on August 26. On August 23, France announced that it would support Poland, but the Supreme Council of National Defense decided that no military action would be taken against Germany unless it attacked France itself. On the same day, Chamberlain's letter was handed over to Hitler, in which London announced that in the event of war, England would support Poland, but at the same time showed readiness for an agreement with Germany. Goering's visit was still expected in England, and it was only on August 24 that it became clear that he would not come. Having received early on the morning of August 24 a report from Ribbentrop about the success of his mission, Hitler gave vent to his feelings. In a manic frenzy, he pounded his fists on the wall and shouted: "Now the whole world is in my pocket!" On the same day, Germany notified Poland that British guarantees were an obstacle to the settlement of the conflict. Fearing that Warsaw would make concessions and rapprochement with Berlin, England signed an agreement on mutual assistance with Poland on August 25, but no military agreement was concluded. On the same day, Germany notified England that "after the solution of the Polish problem" she would propose a comprehensive agreement of cooperation and peace, up to and including guarantees of the existence and assistance of the British Empire. But on the evening of August 25, Berlin became aware of the Anglo-Polish treaty, and Italy, which had previously expressed fears about the threat of a world war, announced its refusal to participate in the war. All this led

to the order to cancel the attack on Poland at about 20:00, and the army managed to be held literally at the last moment. The next day, London and Paris offered Warsaw to organize a mutual exchange of population with Germany. Nevertheless, Beck was still convinced that "to date, Hitler has not yet decided to go to war ... in no case will anything decisive happen in the near future"<sup>198</sup>. England, France and Poland were still not sure that Germany would dare to fight. On August 26, instead of 300 thousand reservists in England, only 35 thousand were called up, since it was believed that the Anglo-Polish treaty would keep Germany out of the war. On the same day, information was received from London to Berlin that England would not intervene in the event of a German attack on Poland, or would declare war, but would not fight. On August 28, England refused the German proposals for a guarantee of the empire, recommending that Berlin begin direct negotiations with Warsaw. If Germany agrees to a peaceful settlement, then England agreed to consider at a future conference the general problems of Anglo-German relations. London again warned Berlin that in the event of war, England would support Poland, but at the same time promised to influence the Poles in favor of negotiations with Germany. At the same time, Poland was

recommended to expedite negotiations with Germany. London also asked Mussolini to hint to Hitler that "if the settlement of the present crisis is limited to the return of Danzig and sections of the German 'corridor', then it seems to us that a solution without war can be found, within a reasonable period of time." Naturally, Warsaw should not have known about this. If the German-Polish "negotiations led to



agreement, which the British Government is counting on, the way would be open to broad agreement between Germany and England"201 On the afternoon of August 28, Hitler set a tentative date for attack on 1 September. Using English negotiation sentences, Germanic the leadership decided to demand "the annexation of Danzig, the passage through the Polish corridor and a referendum [similar to the one held in the Saarland]. England will perhaps accept our conditions. Poland, apparently not. A split!"202 On August 29, Germany agreed to direct negotiations with Poland on the terms of the transfer of Danzig, a plebiscite in the "Polish corridor" and guarantees of the new borders of Poland by Germany, Italy, England, France and THE USSR. The arrival of Polish representatives for the talks was expected on 30 August. Passing these British proposals, Hitler hoped that "he would drive a wedge between England, France and Poland"203 On the same day, Berlin notified Moscow of Britain's proposals for settlement of the German-Polish conflict and that Germany, as a condition put the preservation of the treaty with the USSR, the union with Italy and will not participate in international conference without the participation of the USSR, together with which everything should be decided Eastern European issues.

On August 30, England reaffirmed its consent to influence Poland, with provided that there will be no war and Germany will stop the anti-Polish campaign in the press. In that In this case, London confirmed its consent to the convening of an international conference in the future. On this day, the Wehrmacht still had not received an order to attack Poland, because there was a possibility that England would make concessions and then the offensive would postponed until September 2, and in this case "there will be no more war at all", since "the arrival of the Poles in Berlin = submission" 205 . August 30 England received accurate information about Germany's proposals for the settlement of the Polish problem. However, London is informed Warsaw of these proposals, and, hoping to still delay the war, on the night of 31 August notified Berlin of the approval of direct German-Polish negotiations, which should have started some time later. Early on the morning of August 31, Hitler signed Directive No. 1, according to which the attack on Poland was to begin at 4.45 am 1 September 1939. It was not until the afternoon of August 31 that German proposals for a settlement of the crisis were handed over by England to Poland with a recommendation to respond positively to them and expedite negotiations with Germany.

At 12.00 on August 31, Warsaw announced to London that it was ready for negotiations with Berlin under provided that Germany and Poland mutually guarantee the non-use of force, mothball the situation in Danzig, and England during the negotiations will support the Polish side. However, the Polish ambassador in Berlin was ordered to play for time, because in Warsaw still believed that "Hitler will not dare to start a war. Hitler is only playing nerves and stretches the strings to the extreme limits "206. As a result, at 18.00, Ribbentrop, in a conversation with Polish ambassador in Berlin stated the absence of a Polish emergency authorized and refused to negotiate. At 21.15-21.45 Germany officially presented its proposals to Poland to the ambassadors of England, France and the United States and declared that Warsaw refused to negotiate. At the same time, German radio reported these proposals on the settlement of the crisis and on Polish provocations at the border. On the same day, Italy offered Germany mediation services in resolving the crisis, but, having been refused, notified England and France that she would not fight207 On September 1, Germany attacked Poland, and the European crisis escalated into a war, which a few days later entered England and France.

In the context of the collapse of the Versailles-Washington system of international relations the struggle of the great powers for their interests intensified. By 1939, two military-political blocs of the great powers, in which England and France opposed Germany and Italy, to which Japan gravitated. The USSR and the USA were waiting position, hoping to use the war between these blocs to their advantage.

In the conditions of the crisis of 1939, the elimination of the threat from Germany was of paramount importance for France, so Paris more actively advocated the creation of an anti-German military coalition with the participation of not only Poland, but also the USSR. True, the French leadership sought to place the brunt of the war on its Eastern European allies. England had a significant influence on the policy of France, which allows us to speak about significant pro-English tendencies of the French leadership. At the same time, Paris did not rule out the possibility of reaching a new agreement with Germany, which was pressured by negotiations with Moscow.

Italy, bound by an alliance with Germany, hoped to gain some benefit from the European crisis in the form of strengthening its positions in the Balkans and the Mediterranean, but categorically refused to participate in the war with an unclear outcome. In general, Rome tried to play the role of an intermediary between England, France

and Germany. The United States took a passive position regarding the European political crisis, although they had a fairly good idea of the situation in Europe. Washington followed the developments in the Far East just as closely, but in this region, too, the passive policy of the United States was covered up by the existence of a law on neutrality. Thus, the US continued to take a wait-and-see attitude, preparing to engage in a possible war at a later stage. The US was also interested in making it difficult to defuse tensions in Europe, since only in this case their political weight on the continent could increase. During 1939, Japan once again tried to end the war in China,

continuing to oust its British, French and American competitors from there, who took a passive position, fearing the conclusion of a German-Italian-Japanese alliance. Japan hoped to use European contradictions to consolidate its gains in China and recognize its new role in the Far East, which required continued maneuvering between the great powers. The German-Italian proposal for a military alliance against the other great powers did not meet Japanese interests. In Tokyo, they would have willingly agreed to an anti-Soviet alliance, but they were not going to spoil relations with England, France and the USA in order to please Berlin and Rome. On the whole, the events of 1939 in the Far East had only an indirect effect on the development of the European situation. In the conditions of the European political crisis, the goals and actions of England, Germany and the USSR were of primary

importance. Feeling a threat to its position in the world from the USA, Germany and the USSR, England tried to continue

the already traditional policy of "appeasement", supplementing it from March 1939 with measures of military-political pressure on Berlin. According to London, this was to force Germany to refrain from further expansion and to settle relations with England. In turn, the Anglo-German agreement would serve as the basis for the consolidation of Europe, which would give England a strong rear in the confrontation with the United States and a barrier against the strengthening of Soviet influence. In the long term, European consolidation could contribute to the creation of a new system of international relations with the participation of the United States and Japan, but without taking into account the interests of the USSR. The British leadership believed that the threat of war with England, along with generous offers from London, would force Germany to make agreements with her. At the same time, England herself was interested in avoiding a war that would only worsen her situation. It is no coincidence that London, warning Berlin that Poland would receive British support in the event of war, did not prepare to carry out these warnings. Under these conditions, negotiations with Moscow were viewed in London only as a means of putting pressure on Berlin. Moreover, spending in the

1920-1930s. policy of limiting Soviet influence in Europe, England during the events of 1939 faced the problem of how to involve the USSR in ensuring the security of the countries of Eastern Europe, but at the same time not push these

countries, as a rule, anti-Soviet, in the camp of Germany. It is no coincidence that England tried to reach the broadest and most vague agreement with Moscow, which should not affect the interests of the Eastern European countries. All this made the Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations even more difficult, which eventually reached an impasse, since England did not dare to pay the price asked by Moscow for an alliance with the USSR. In addition, the outcome of the negotiations was also affected by the fact that the parties sought to achieve different goals: the USSR needed an alliance for a war in Europe, while England and France wanted to avoid war by scaring Germany with the specter of a tripartite alliance. England took a no less evasive position in relation to Poland, whose assistance, despite guarantees, and later an alliance, was not going to be provided, because in London they hoped for the stamina of the Polish army, their diplomatic maneuvers or for a possible German-Soviet war on the ruins of Poland. Although, as the events of the last week of August 1939 showed, it was precisely the honest fulfillment by England of its obligations to Poland that could stop Germany.

In the situation of 1939, Germany sought, by new expansionist measures, to finally consolidate its influence in Eastern Europe, which would become a reliable rear for the war with England and France for European hegemony and cover against the USSR. Berlin was well aware that without solving these problems, a war with the USSR was impossible, so Europe should have been consolidated first, but in the German manner, not on the basis of reaching a compromise between the four great powers, but on the basis of their subordination to Germany. The achievement of this goal would bring Germany into the ranks of world powers and would allow, in alliance with Japan, to undertake an anti-Soviet campaign, after the victorious end of which a single military-political bloc would be created in Eurasia, with which the United States would be forced to reckon. That is, it was also about the formation of a new system of international relations, but on German principles. True, this was still too distant a prospect, but for now, in the spring of 1939, Germany was faced with the British policy of "encirclement" and was forced to solve the problem of localizing a possible conflict with Poland. It was necessary to create a German-Italian-Japanese bloc, achieve non-intervention of England and France in the German-Polish conflict and prevent the creation of an Anglo-French-Soviet alliance.

The first task was only partially solved, since Japan was in no hurry to conclude an unconditional treaty with Germany and Italy, whose union was also fragile. The Anglo-French policy of threats and offers of concessions pursued against Germany throughout the 1930s gave rise to the confidence in Berlin that Britain and France would again make concessions at the expense of Poland. The problem of the failure of the Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations was made easier by the fact that the parties were in no hurry to make an alliance with each other. In the spring and summer of 1939, the confidence of the German leadership in the possibility of reaching an agreement with the USSR often gave way to extreme pessimism, and after this change of mood, German diplomacy also experienced fluctuations, which nevertheless gradually moved from soundings to more specific proposals. As the critical period in relations with Poland approached, Germany increasingly raised the stakes in negotiations with the USSR, and as a result, the parties signed a non-aggression pact based on the delimitation of interests in Eastern Europe, which ensured not only Soviet interests, but also

Germany's rear, facilitating her war in Europe. At the same time, Germany was intensively looking for the possibility of a compromise with England, which was supposed to be as temporary as the agreement with the USSR. Confidence that England and France would not intervene in the German-Polish war allowed Germany to set a specific date for the attack on Poland, but at the last moment the attack had to be abandoned, as there was a threat of Anglo-French intervention. Only in the course of a new round of diplomatic contacts did Germany become convinced that it would not be possible to solve the Polish problem without the use of force, but one should not be afraid of the serious participation of England and France in the German-Polish war. The German leadership decided to take a chance, and on September

By 1939, the Soviet Union had basically solved the problem of military-economic modernization and consolidation of Soviet society and was ready to more actively defend its foreign policy interests. Having received another object lesson in Munich, which marked the place of the USSR in Europe, the Soviet leadership was extremely interested in disrupting the trend of European consolidation without taking into account Soviet interests. In this sense, the continuation of German expansion was in the interests of Moscow, as it sharply increased the interest of both European military-political groups in an agreement with the USSR. The crisis in Europe that began in March-April 1939 confirmed that both Britain, France and Germany were interested in an agreement with the USSR. Thus, the Soviet leadership could choose with whom and under what conditions it would negotiate, taking into account its interests. An agreement with England and France required the consent of these countries to recognize the USSR as a European great power and increase its influence on the continent. London and Paris were unable to make such a concession, not least because an alliance with the USSR would mean the final split of Europe into military-political blocs and, in the opinion of the Western powers, threatened to draw them into the war they sought to avoid. directing German expansion to the East. In addition, the partners at the talks in Moscow, apparently, were not too afraid of Germany, which also did not speed up the course of the latter. As a result, due to the irreconcilability of the interests of the parties, the negotiations reached an impasse.

At the same time, in the course of German-Soviet contacts, Moscow, given Berlin's penchant for agreement, for a long time could not push Germany to make its position clear. Only in August 1939 did the German leadership decide to make a concrete proposal to the USSR, which, in the course of skillfully conducted negotiations, managed to force Berlin to take into account Soviet interests to the maximum extent. Against the backdrop of sluggish negotiations with Britain and France, Moscow opted for an agreement with Germany, which was a temporary compromise for both sides. At the same time, thanks to the pact, the USSR received recognition of its interests from the side of a great European power. Even under these conditions, England and France did not dare to accept the Soviet terms of the alliance, focusing on finding a compromise with Germany, which pushed her to war with Poland. The start of the war in Europe allowed Moscow to start realizing its expansionist aspirations in Eastern Europe for the time being.

Thus, the Kremlin managed to use the European crisis to its advantage, so the Soviet-German non-aggression pact can be regarded as a significant success of Soviet diplomacy, which was able to outmaneuver British diplomacy and achieve its main goal - to stay out of the European war, while gaining considerable freedom of hands in Eastern Europe, more room for maneuver between the warring factions in their own interests, while shifting the blame for the breakdown of the Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations on London and Paris. It was not in the interests of the Soviet leadership to prevent the war in Europe between the Anglo-French bloc and Germany, since only the war gave him a real chance to significantly increase his influence on

continent.

In 1939, Europe was split into three military-political camps: Anglo-French, German-Italian and Soviet, each of which sought to achieve its own goals, which could not but lead to war. It is clear that each great power counted on a favorable development of events for itself. England and France sought to direct German expansion to the East, which should have led to a clash between Germany and the USSR, their mutual weakening, and would have strengthened the position of London and Paris on the world stage. Naturally, the role of the "sacrificial lamb" did not smile at Moscow at all, and the Soviet leadership did everything to avert the threat of being drawn into a possible European war, which was supposed to weaken Germany, England and France, which, in turn, would allow the USSR to take the position of a kind of arbiter on which the outcome of the war depends, and to maximize its influence on

continent. For its part, Germany, well aware of the impossibility of a simultaneous clash with a coalition of great powers, counted on a local operation against Poland, which would improve its strategic position for further struggle for hegemony in Europe with England, France and the USSR. Italy sought to obtain new concessions from England and France as a result of their conflict with Germany, but she herself was in no hurry to fight. The United States needed a war in Europe in order to rule out the possibility of an Anglo-German alliance, finally take England's place in the world and weaken the USSR, which would allow it to become the main world power. Japan, taking advantage of the employment of the other great powers in Europe, intended to end the war in China on its own terms, to obtain from the United States consent to the strengthening of Japanese influence in the Far East and, under favorable conditions, to participate in the war against the USSR. Thus, as a result of the actions of all the main participants, the pre-war political crisis turned into a war unleashed by Germany.

## September 1939

The intransigence of Poland, the policy of "appeasement" on the part of Britain and France, the Soviet-German non-aggression pact led to the fact that the political crisis of 1939 escalated in September into a war unleashed by Germany. The outbreak of World War II in Europe in September 1939 still causes lively political discussions, which is associated with the desire of the participants in the events to whitewash themselves. The historical sources now available allow a more objective assessment of the situation in the first month of the war. In historiography, the assertion has become commonplace that it was the union of England, France and the USSR that would be able to stop German expansion. True, it is mainly the political, and not the military, aspect of this agreement that is meant. As a rule, much less attention is paid to the creation of an Anglo-Franco-Polish coalition, although this alliance also had a serious military potential. In addition, there were no political problems that aggravated the Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations. During

the political crisis in Europe in the spring and summer of 1939, the parties began concrete military preparations. As you know, Poland was considered in Berlin as a potential adversary as early as the 1920s, when the first plans for a war with it were prepared. These plans were based on the idea of delivering concentric strikes from East Prussia and Silesia with the aim of encircling and defeating as much of the Polish army as possible, capturing the economically important regions of Western Poland and ending the war as soon as possible. These strategic ideas formed the basis of German military planning in 1939.<sup>208</sup> On April 3, 1939, the chief of staff of the Supreme

High Command of the Wehrmacht (OKW), General W. Keitel, informed the commanders-in-chief of the ground forces, the Air Force and the Navy that a draft "Directive on uniform training" had been prepared armed forces to the war for 1939-1940. At the same time, the commanders-in-chief of the branches of the armed forces received a preliminary version of the plan for the war with Poland (the "Weiss" plan), which they had to study and by May 1, 1939 submit their views on the use of troops in the war against Poland, the organization of their interaction and the calendar plan of events for preparation of the operation. Full preparations for war should have been completed by September 1, 1939. On April 11, A. Hitler approved the "Directive on the unified preparation of the armed forces for war for 1939-1940." Thus, concrete operational planning began in Germany for a war with Poland, which was to remain a local conflict.

In April - June 1939, specific plans were developed in Germany for the use of the Wehrmacht in the war against Poland. The strategic plan and tasks of the troops in Operation Weiss were set out in the directive on the strategic concentration and deployment of ground forces of June 15, 1939. The purpose of the operation was to defeat the main forces of the Polish army west of the line with concentric strikes from Silesia, Pomerania and East Prussia. the Vistula and Narew rivers. The general task of the Wehrmacht

was to carry out the coverage of the Polish army from the southwest and northwest with its subsequent encirclement and defeat. From the very beginning of the war, the operations of the German troops had to develop rapidly in order to disrupt the mobilization and deployment of the Polish armed forces. To

accomplish these tasks, two army groups were created. Army Group North (commanded by Colonel-General F. von Bock) was deployed in Pomerania and East Prussia as part of the 3rd and 4th armies, the immediate task of which was to occupy the "Polish corridor", ensure land communications with East Prussia and closing blows east of the Vistula in the general direction of Warsaw. Army Group "South" (commander - Colonel General G. von Runstedt) was concentrated in Silesia and Slovakia as part of the 8th, 10th and 14th armies, which delivered the main blow in Operation Weiss. The immediate task of the Army Group "South" was to advance with its strike force (10th Army) in the general direction of Warsaw, break through the Polish front, reach the Vistula River and then, in cooperation with the Army Group "North", destroy the Polish troops, located in Western Poland. The 8th and 14th armies were assigned flanking cover for the strike force. From the air, these groupings were supposed to support the 1st and 4th air fleets, respectively. For the implementation of the Weiss plan, it was planned to allocate 40 infantry, 4 light infantry, 3 mountain infantry, 6 tank and 4 motorized divisions and 1 cavalry brigade.

When preparing an operation against Poland, the German command proceeded from the fact that England and France would not intervene in the German-Polish war. However, the question of whether the intervention of the Western powers would be completely ruled out was never decided. Therefore, measures were provided to cover the western border of Germany, where it was planned to deploy Army Group "C" (commander General W. Leeb) as part of the 1st, 5th and 7th armies, which would have consisted of 31 divisions and, relying on the unfinished the Siegfried Line, was supposed to defend the border with the Netherlands, Belgium and France. Thus, of the 103 Wehrmacht divisions deployed for mobilization, 57 (55.3%) were planned to be deployed against Poland, 31 (30.1%) - in western Germany, and 15 (14.6%) - in the

central regions of the country. As early as May 1939, six army departments, 11 departments of army corps and 24 divisions were put on alert. Under the guise of preparations for the autumn maneuvers, in early August, a partial mobilization of some reserve divisions, as well as units of army and corps subordination, was carried out. Pre-mobilization activities began in East Prussia in July, and throughout Germany from August 18, 1939. By August 25, the mobilization of the formations, which accounted for 35.4% of the wartime ground forces, had already been completed. By the evening of August 25, 16 2/3 infantry, 4 light infantry, 6 tank, 2 2/3 motorized divisions and 1 cavalry brigade were concentrated against Poland. The signal for a general mobilization was given in the afternoon of August 25, that is, one day before the scheduled start of the war. In connection with the postponement of the start of the invasion, the German command managed to complete the mobilization by September 1, 1939 and deploy in the East 37 1/3 infantry, 4 light infantry, 1 mountain infantry, 6 tank and 4 2/3 motorized divisions and 1 cavalry brigade (82.6 % of planned forces)<sup>211</sup>. The concentration and mobilization of the Wehrmacht were carried out in compliance with the measures of camouflage and disinformation, so as not to provoke retaliatory actions from Poland. Nevertheless, Polish intelligence as a whole correctly established the number of German groups deployed on the border. So, in the Army Group "North" there were 20.5 divisions, and the Poles believed that there were 20-22 divisions, in the Army Group "South" out of 32 2/3 divisions, Polish intelligence established 28 formations<sup>212</sup>.

Polish strategic planning against Germany was based in the 1920s and 1930s. on the Franco-Polish treaty of 1921 on mutual assistance, which provided for the joint actions of France and Poland. The main idea of military planning until the mid-1930s. consisted in the offensive actions of the French and Polish troops on Berlin. In 1936

the Polish armed forces received a new plan for the war with Germany, according to which they had to defend the German-Polish border and attack East Prussia. But until the end of 1938, the Polish command focused on the development of military plans against the USSR. From the end of February 1939, the Polish command began to develop a specific plan for the war with Germany - "Zahud". After the German occupation of the Czech Republic in March 1939, this document was amended to take into account the current situation. The formation of the Anglo-French-Polish coalition, which began in March 1939, led to the fact that Polish military planning was based on the expectation that England and France would support Poland in the war with Germany. Therefore, the Polish armed forces were tasked with a stubborn defense to ensure the mobilization deployment and concentration of their troops, and then go on a counteroffensive, since it was believed that by this time England and France would force Germany to pull their troops to the west.

To implement this plan, it was planned to deploy 39 infantry divisions, 3 mountain infantry, 11 cavalry, 10 border and 2 armored motorized brigades. These troops were to be organized into seven armies, three task forces and an invasion corps. Operational groups "Narew" (2 infantry divisions, 2 cavalry brigades), "Vyshkow" (2 infantry divisions) and the army "Modlin" (2 infantry divisions, 2 cavalry brigades) were deployed against East Prussia. In the "Polish corridor" the "Help" army (5 infantry divisions, 1 cavalry brigade) was concentrated, part of whose forces were intended to capture Danzig. The Poznan army (4 infantry divisions and 2 cavalry brigades) was deployed in the Berlin direction. The border with Silesia and Slovakia was covered by the Lodz army (5 infantry divisions, 2 cavalry brigades), the Krakow army (7 infantry divisions, 1 cavalry brigade and 1 tank battalion) and the Karpaty army (1 infantry division and border units). In the rear south of Warsaw, the Prusa army was deployed (7 infantry divisions, 1 cavalry brigade and 1 armored motorized brigade). In the areas of Kutno and Tarnov, 2 infantry divisions were concentrated in reserve<sup>213</sup>. Thus, the Polish army had to deploy evenly on a wide front, which made it problematic to repulse the massive attacks of the Wehrmacht.

The covert mobilization deployment of Polish troops, which began on March 23, 1939, affected 4 infantry divisions and 1 cavalry brigade, formations were reinforced in a number of districts, and directorates of four armies and an operational group were created. These measures were based on the mobilization plan "W" of April 1938, which provided for covert mobilization in peacetime. On August 13-18, the mobilization of another 9 formations was announced, and on August 23, covert mobilization of the main forces began. The regrouping of troops, provided for by the strategic deployment plan, began on August 26, when the troops received an order to move the mobilized formations to the designated areas of concentration. The order for the armies and operational groups of the first echelon to occupy the starting position was given on 30 August. The Polish leadership carried out measures to mobilize the army in secret from their Anglo-French allies, who feared that these actions of Warsaw could push Germany to war. Therefore, when on August 29 they were about to begin open mobilization in Poland, England and France insisted on postponing it until August 31. Nevertheless, thanks to covert mobilization, by the morning of September 1, the mobilization plan was completed by 60%, but the deployment of Polish troops was not completed - only 46.8% of the troops were in the destination areas, but they did not have time to fully take up their positions<sup>214</sup>. By the morning of September 1, Poland deployed 24 infantry divisions, 3 mountain infantry, 8 cavalry and 1 armored motorized brigades.

Pre-mobilization measures in France began to be carried out as early as the summer of 1939, when reservists were called up in 49 special fortress battalions and 43 special artillery units that made up the cover troops on the Maginot Line. On August 21, the air defense system was put on alert, and on August 22, the combat readiness system of the French troops was strengthened. On August 23, covert mobilization began in France and

plans were put in place to secure Paris and the borders with Belgium, Italy and Switzerland. On August 24, measures to cover the concentration were extended to the eastern regions of France, and on August 26 to the entire territory of the country. Until August 27, 3/4 of the French armed forces were mobilized - 72 divisions (1,895 thousand people, 8 thousand guns and mortars, 2.5 thousand tanks and up to 2 thousand aircraft). On August 27, another 725 thousand people were called up, and the armed forces reached a strength of 2,674 thousand people. On September 1, when open mobilization was announced in France, there were 72 infantry (personnel, reserve, North African, colonial and fortress troops, equivalent to 15 divisions), 3 cavalry, 2 light mechanized divisions and 39 separate tank battalions on its territory, but no active these troops had no missions<sup>215</sup> Having completed the concentration and deployment of the .

Wehrmacht according to the Weiss plan, Germany, confident in the non-intervention of England and France, attacked Poland<sup>216</sup>. At 4.30 am on September 1, 1939, the German Air Force launched a massive attack on Polish airfields, at 4.45 am the training artillery ship (former battleship) Schleswig-Holstein opened fire on Westerplatte, at the same time, German ground forces crossed the border of Poland, trying to carry out the strategic plan of the operation "Weiss". By September 5, German troops occupied the "Polish corridor", partially defeating the units of the Polish army "Help". The troops of the army "Modlin" from September 4 began to retreat south under the continuous attacks of the 3rd German army. To create a strike force on the left wing of the 3rd Army, a regrouping of the mobile units of Army Group North began. The troops of the 4th Army advanced along the Vistula to Warsaw, and the 3rd Army already on September 6 captured a bridgehead on the Narew River, threatening the encirclement of Polish troops in the Warsaw area. In the south, on September 2, Polish units received

an order to withdraw to the main defensive position along the Warta and Vidavka rivers, but were in no hurry to fulfill it. While stubborn battles continued at the front, units of the German 16th Panzer Corps rushed to the rear of the defenders through the discovered gap between the troops of the Lodz and Krakow armies. However, such a success was also unexpected for the German command, which ordered the offensive to stop on September 3. All this suggests that the Wehrmacht has not yet mastered the methods of using "tank wedges", which played a significant role in the subsequent events of the Second World War. On the evening of September 2, the Lodz army began to withdraw to the main line of defense, exposing the flank of the Krakow army, whose command was more concerned about the situation on the Polish-Slovak border, where the German 14th Army successfully advanced deep into the Polish defense, which also forced the Poles to start waste. In turn, the withdrawal of the Krakow army exposed the entire southern front of the Polish defense, but Warsaw expected that the Prusa reserve army would be able to create a stable front, not taking into account the fact that the concentration of its formations was still far from complete. As a result, on September 5, German troops broke through the Polish front, which, in the absence of ready reserves, doomed the Polish army to defeat.

In order to create a new stable front, the Polish command on September 5 ordered all troops to withdraw across the Vistula. On the same day, the 14th German Army received an order to advance east of the Vistula to Lublin, for a deep coverage of the Polish troops from the east. The 10th German Army received the task of quickly breaking through to the crossings in the middle reaches of the Vistula in order to cut off the Poles' escape route to the eastern regions of the country. The next day, the German command ordered further operations to encircle the Poles east of the Vistula. Thus, the German troops managed to win border battles in the first 5 days of the war, but, faced with stronger than expected resistance from the Poles, they were forced to make adjustments to the original plans for the war, increasing the depth of the operation. Here it is worth turning to the question of the reaction of England and France to the outbreak of the German-Polish war.



As early as August 31, B. Mussolini proposed to England and France to convene a conference of England, France, Italy and Germany on September 5 to discuss "the difficulties arising from the Treaty of Versailles." This proposal met with favorable support in London and Paris, which on September 1, instead of providing the promised assistance to Poland, continued to search for ways to appease Germany. At 11.50 France notified Italy of its agreement to participate in the conference if Poland was invited to it. However, only in the second half of September 1, France decided to find out Poland's opinion on the planned conference, but it was not possible to quickly get an answer from Warsaw. On the evening of the same day, England and France handed over to Germany notes in which they expressed "protest" about the German invasion of Poland, and warned that they would fulfill their obligations to Poland, "if the German government is not ready ... to suspend the offensive ... and. ..immediately return troops from Polish territory"<sup>217</sup>. However, on the afternoon of September 2, they informed Berlin via Italy that these notes should not be taken as an ultimatum. Moreover, Britain informed Germany that in the event of the withdrawal of the Wehrmacht from Poland, "the British government is ready to forget everything and start negotiations"<sup>218</sup>. This strengthened the confidence of the German leadership that the allies continue to evade fulfilling their obligations.

On the same day, it became known in Paris that Warsaw had a negative attitude towards the convening of the conference. But her allies continued to hope for this opportunity, and, unlike England, France was not opposed to leaving German troops on Polish territory. Only on September 3 at 11.00 England, and at 17.00 France declared war on Germany. The following day, the Franco-Polish Mutual Assistance Treaty was signed. However, this did not shake Hitler's confidence, who believed that "if they declared war on us, then this is in order to save their face, and besides, this does not mean that they will And indeed, after the formal changed. . . declaration of war on Franco -Germany to fight "<sup>219</sup> the border has not The Germans continued to build fortifications, and the French troops, whose advanced units were forbidden to load their weapons with live shells and cartridges, stared blankly at German territory. Although the declaration of war by London and Paris caused some confusion in Berlin, the constant lull on the Western Front convinced the German leadership that the Allies were unlikely to take any real action. Therefore, the new OKW Directive No. 2 of September 3 proceeded from the idea of continuing large-scale operations in Poland and passive waiting in the West<sup>220</sup>. The Polish representatives in England and France faced the obstructionist position of

London and Paris. The French commander-in-chief, General M. Gamelin, did not want to receive the Polish military attaché. On the evening of September 6, a Polish note arrived in Paris, which reported on the pessimistic mood of the German population in connection with the outbreak of war and proposed "to strike a blow at the morale of the enemy." To do this, it was necessary to "carry out an operation of the Allied air forces against German territory", "break through the Siegfried Line at least at two points ... carry out at least a small amphibious assault on the German coast"<sup>221</sup>. On September 7, Warsaw received a French response, according to which "tomorrow, and at the latest the morning after tomorrow, a strong attack by French and British bombers against Germany will be carried out, which, perhaps, will be extended even to rear formations on the Polish front." Understandably, this response reassured the Poles, who did not know that the bombing of German territory was actually avoided in Paris, fearing the Luftwaffe's retaliatory measures. As a result, on September 7, the Polish military attaché in France was forced to state in his report to Warsaw: "There is actually no war in the

West. Neither the French nor the Germans shoot at each other. In the same way, there are still no air actions. My assessment : the French do not carry out any further mobilization or further action and are awaiting the results of the battle in Poland"<sup>222</sup> The Polish representatives continued

insist and ask the French leadership to fulfill their obligations to Warsaw. This irritated Gamelin, who wrote: "The Polish military attache continues to bother us! I also knew that the Polish ambassador in Paris showed nervousness and even injustice towards the French army and especially aviation." The only thing that the Poles achieved was a promise to send military equipment and ammunition to Poland through Romania, which were never sent due to the defeat of Poland. In mid-September, General Gamelin wrote in his diary that France could help Poland in 1940, and that France would prepare for an offensive on a broad front in 1941 or 1942. The British government behaved in exactly the same way as the French. On

September 3, a Polish military mission arrived in London, but the Poles managed to meet with the Chief of the British General Staff, General W. Ironside, only on September 9. During the meeting, Ironside began to clarify the situation at the front, and the Poles were surprised to learn that England had no specific plans to help Poland, since France was supposed to deal with this. Referring to being busy, Ironside stopped the conversation, finally recommending that the Poles buy weapons in neutral countries. On September 10, the Polish military mission was informed that the British Air Force had begun bombing Germany, and a transport with 44 aircraft for Poland had arrived in Romania. All this was an outright lie. The Poles' proposal to send Anglo-French aviation to Polish airfields was never accepted. On September 13, the Poles stated that "England did not keep, as before, its obligations, because during the 14 days of the war we remain left to our own devices, and the assistance that should have been sent to Poland as a result of negotiations with General Clayton that took place in May in Warsaw, was not granted to Poland". On September 15, during the last meeting with Ironside, the Poles learned that, apart from 10 thousand machine guns and 15-20 million rounds of ammunition, England could not allocate any other weapons, and this could only be done in 5-6 months. Ironside again advised the Poles to buy weapons from the neutrals.

What was the state of the parties on the Western Front at the beginning of the German-Polish

war? By September 1, 1939, Germany deployed Army Group C on its western border, which was entrusted with the task of providing rear cover for operations in Poland against the threat of Anglo-French intervention. These troops were deployed from the lower Rhine to the Swiss border and on September 1, totaled 31 2/3 infantry divisions, and 3 more infantry divisions were in the process of redeployment to the West. After September 3, Army Group "C" was subordinated to 9 more infantry divisions, which were mainly concentrated by September 10, increasing the total strength of the grouping to 43 2/3 infantry divisions, of which only 11 2/3 "could be called full-fledged, all the rest were new formations that did not at all correspond in their training and technical equipment to the requirements of mobile warfare" 224 By September 1, these troops numbered about 915 thousand people and had about 8,640 guns and mortars, but did not have a single tank. The ground forces supported the 2nd and 3rd air fleets, in which there were 1,094 aircraft (of which 966 were combat-ready), in addition, flight units with 144 aircraft (of which 113 were combat-ready) were subordinated to the command of Army Group C. and naval aviation in the West consisted of 121 aircraft (114 combat-ready). In total, there were 1,359 aircraft (1,193 combat-ready) in the West, including 421 bombers and 632 fighters. The construction of the Western Wall, on which these troops

were to rely, had not yet been completed. "By the beginning of the war, there were basically only fortified points for infantry weapons, command posts, a network of telephone lines for fortified areas, anti-personnel and anti-tank barriers. There were no artillery positions in the form of armored structures, just as there were no reinforced concrete or armored fortifications for anti-tank weapons" 226 . According to General N. Foreman, "Western

the rampart was not an insurmountable obstacle. True, between Luxembourg and Switzerland, mainly in the section between Saarbrücken and Karlsruhe, was a certain number of ready-made armored gun emplacements, anti-tank ditches and other obstacles. However, everywhere the organization was still working at an accelerated pace. Todt. Most of the line was still on paper. About ready-made strong positions at all could be out of the question. Deep separation has not been established anywhere"227.

The French command deployed the North-Eastern Front against Germany in part of the 1st, Arden, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 7th and 8th armies, in which by September 3 there were 78 divisions (of which 13 were serfs, and 7 completed the formation). IN these troops had 17,500 guns and mortars, over 2,000 tanks. French Air Force consisted of 1,400 first-line aircraft and about 1,600 in reserve, in addition, for operations in France, 1,021 British aircraft could be used. Already September 4th mobilization in France was completed, and the troops were deployed in positions. By September 10 the French armed forces completed their wartime deployment and numbered almost 5 million people228 .

#### Table 5

Balance of forces on the fronts in September 1939

France Germany Germany Poland Rel. 1.8: 1,78 43 2/3

Divisions 61 33 1.8: 1 - - - Brigades 1

13 1: 13 3.2: 1 3,253

1,000 Personnel (thousands) 1,800 1,000 1.8: 1 2: 1 17,500

8,640 Guns and mortars 13,500 4,300 3: 1 - 2,850 - Tanks

2,533,610 4.2: 1 1.8: 1 2,421\*

1,359 Aircraft 2,231,824 2.7: 1 \* Including the

British Air Force, but without a reserve.

Since May 31, the French General Staff has been developing a plan of attack on the front between the Moselle and the Rhine, which was to become the basis of military operations against Germany and was on September 1, 1939 offered by General Gamelin to the government. The French troops were to deliver the main blow along the Rhine to Mainz, cutting off the main German grouping from the rear. However, this proposal was never implemented. Instead, the French command undertook a limited operation near Saarbrücken. On the night of September 7, French search parties for the first time crossed the German border west of the city. Since September 9, units of 9 French divisions The 4th and 5th armies began to advance in the foreground of the Siegfried Line east of Saarbrücken, not meeting the resistance of the German troops, who were ordered evade the battle and retreat to the line of fortifications. Having occupied the Varnd forest to the west of the city and advancing 7-8 km between Spichern and Hornbach on a front of about 25 km, the French received on September 12 an order to stop the offensive "in view of the rapid development of events in Poland"229 .

On the same day, the French commander-in-chief, who believed that these attacks were not can have a greater influence on events in Poland, said at the first meeting of the Higher Military Allied Council in Abbeville: "There is no longer any need for immediate provide an attack base against the Siegfried Line ... If the enemy attacks through Luxembourg, and especially through Belgium, we will not have enough of all our active forces to resist him." Although the Council approved the decision to stop the offensive, Gamelin 14 September, he told the head of the Polish military mission in France: "The last meeting The Supreme Council of the Allies determined the firm determination of France and Great Britain provide Poland with all possible assistance. The forms of this assistance are outlined jointly with our British allies after a thorough analysis of the general situation, and I can To assure you that none of the possibilities of direct assistance to Poland and its army will neglected"230 .

Analyzing these events, the French historian A. Gutard remarks, not without wit: "The French and the British felt relieved, and since the Germans felt it too, it can be said that it rarely happened that any solution caused in both camps such unanimous relief"<sup>231</sup> As J. Mordal rightly noted, "the decision adopted at Abville on September 12, 1939 by the Allied Supreme Council, was not only rejection of this word, it was a real surrender without a fight"<sup>232</sup> At the same time, the French press began a noisy campaign about "operations against Germany", which, as reported, placed before her "a difficult strategic problem." On September 14, when the advance of the troops stopped, the press reported that "military operations on the Western Front between the Rhine and the Moselle continue. The French surround Saarbrücken from the east and west. "On September 19, when the French units were withdrawn to their original positions, a message followed that "battles that were previously were limited to the Saarbrücken area, now covered the entire front with a length of 160 km "<sup>233</sup> . On October 3-4, French troops left German territory, and by October 16 the advanced units of the Wehrmacht again deployed on the border with France<sup>234</sup>.

Thus, instead of 35-40 divisions, which France promised to throw against Germany, only 9 divisions were used. But the French command diligently exaggerated the scope of this limited operation. On September 10, Gamelin assured the Polish leadership that "more than half of our active divisions of the North-Eastern Front are fighting. After we crossed the border, the Germans opposed us with a strong resistance. Nevertheless, we have moved forward. But we are stuck in a positional war, having an enemy prepared for defense against me, and I still do not have all necessary artillery. From the very beginning, the air force was thrown to participate in positional operations. We believe that we have against us a significant part of the German aviation. Therefore, I fulfilled my promise ahead of schedule to launch an offensive with powerful main forces on the 15th day after the announcement of the French mobilization "<sup>235</sup>. However such statements could not, of course, hide the fact that Poland was abandoned by its allies to their fate.

Berlin was well aware of the danger of the activation of the Anglo-French armed forces, which was all the higher because the Ruhr industrial area was located in fact, on the western border of Germany, within the range of not only aviation, but also Allied long-range artillery. Possessing on the Western Front an overwhelming superiority over Germany, the Allies had a full opportunity in early September launch a decisive offensive, which, most likely, would be fatal for Germany. Participants in the events from the German side unanimously argued that this would mean the end of the war and the defeat of Germany. General A. Jodl believed that "we never, not in 1938, nor in 1939, were actually able to withstand the concentrated blow of all these countries. And if we did not suffer defeat back in 1939, then this is only because about 110 French and English divisions, stationed during our war with Poland in the West against 23 German divisions, remained completely inactive "<sup>236</sup>. According to General F. Halder, "in September 1939, the Anglo-French troops could, without encountering serious resistance, cross the Rhine and threaten the Ruhr basin, the possession of which was a decisive factor for the conduct Germany of the

war"<sup>237</sup> As General B. Müller-Gillebrand noted, "the Western powers, as a result of their extreme slowness missed an easy victory. She would get them easily, because along with other shortcomings of the German land army of wartime and quite weak military potential ... ammunition stocks in September 1939 were so insignificant, that in the shortest possible time the continuation of the war for Germany would be impossible "<sup>238</sup> . According to General N. Foreman, "if these forces were set in motion (allies. - M.M.), who had a monstrous superiority, to which then, probably, if the Dutch and Belgians had joined, the war would inevitably have ended. Resistance

Army Group "C" could last at best a few days. Even if this time were used to transfer troops from east to west, it still would not help. In this case, any action would be meaningless. In Poland, hostilities would have to be stopped even before decisive successes were achieved, and the divisions would not have made it to the west in time and were defeated one by one - of course, if the enemy had energetic, purposeful leadership. In a week at the latest, the mines of the Saar and the Ruhr would have been lost, and in the second week the French could send troops wherever they saw fit. To this it should be added that the Poles would also regain freedom of action and put their army in order.

Lieutenant General Z. Westphal believed that "if the French army launched a major offensive on a wide front against the weak German troops covering the border (it is difficult to call them softer than the security forces), then there is almost no doubt that it would break through the German defense, especially in the first ten days of September. Such an offensive, launched before the transfer of significant German forces from Poland to the West, would almost certainly give the French the opportunity to easily reach the Rhine and maybe even force it. This could significantly change the further course of the war ... By failing to take advantage of Germany's temporary weakness on the Western Front for an immediate strike, the French missed the opportunity to place Nazi Germany under England and France, thus of "appeasement" and not preparing remaining true to the threat of a heavy defeat. their policy for a real war with Germany, they missed a unique chance, together with Poland, to squeeze Germany into the vise of a war on two fronts and in September 1939 inflict a decisive defeat on it. However, events developed differently, and as a result, "refusing to take advantage of the situation that had developed at the very beginning of the war, the Western powers not only left Poland in trouble, but also plunged the whole world into five years of destructive war"<sup>241</sup> Fearing the withdrawal of Polish troops to the east, the

command of the army group "North" on September 8 set the troops the task of speeding up the offensive along the Vistula to Warsaw and, by forcing the Narew and the Bug, bypassing the Polish capital from the east. The offensive that had begun allowed the Germans to reach the Vistula from Wloclawek to Modlin already on September 11 and cover the Warsaw area from the east. In the south, the German 14th Army, continuing its offensive, crossed the San River in the middle and upper reaches by September 11. The 10th Army continued its offensive into the central regions of Poland, and on September 8 its 4th Panzer Division reached the outskirts of Warsaw. By September 11, German troops had mostly reached the Vistula on the front from Warsaw to Sandomierz. On September 9, the battle on Bzura began, when parts of the Poznan and Help armies retreating to Warsaw launched a flank attack on the formations of the 8th German army advancing north of Lodz, whose command did not expect that the retreating Polish troops would get involved in serious battles. On the night of September 10, 3 Polish divisions launched a surprise attack on the enemy and pushed him back to the south. The German command was able to quickly strengthen its defenses and, having pulled up to 16 divisions, on September 13 went over to the counteroffensive. In the course of stubborn fighting, by September 18, the Polish troops were surrounded and defeated. A little earlier, on September 13-14, the 3rd Army bypassed Warsaw from the east, finally blocking its garrison.

Disorganization grew in Poland. On September 1, President I. Moscicki left the capital, and on September 4, the evacuation of government institutions began. On September 5, the government left Warsaw, and on the night of September 7, the commander-in-chief E. Rydz Smigly left. The headquarters was moved to Brest, from September 10 - to Vladimir-Volynsky, from September 13 - to Mlynov (near Dubno), and on September 15 - to Kolomyia. The day before, Moscicki had also been there. On September 9-11, the Polish leadership negotiated with France for asylum for the government. On September 16, Polish-Romanian negotiations began on the transit of the Polish leadership to France, and on September 17 the government left the country<sup>242</sup>. All this aggravated the chaos and undermined the defense capability of the Polish troops. As early as September 10, the Polish command decided to delay the remaining

troops to the southeast to the border with Romania and here to create a new front. However, the situation changed radically, and this decision could no longer be implemented. flanks  
German troops continued to advance east of the Vistula, completing the encirclement of the remnants Polish army. On September 15, units of the 3rd German Army advancing from the north captured Brest, September 16 - Bialystok, and September 17 - Vlodava. Troops of the 14th Army advancing from the south by September 16, they reached the line Sambir Lvov - Vladimir-Volynsky - Zamosc, and the troops of 10- The 1st Army, having crossed the Vistula, approached Lublin from the southwest. Moscow closely followed the developments in Europe, counting use them to your advantage, which in Eastern Europe were provided agreement with Germany. German leadership, recognizing part of this region apparently considered the Soviet sphere of interests that the USSR was using troops to occupy it, which also met German interests, since Berlin in every possible way emphasized Soviet-German "friendship", trying to keep England and France from interfering in the German-Polish conflict. The German Foreign Ministry, concerned about rumors about the withdrawal of parts of the Red Army from the Polish border, on August 27, asked his embassy in Moscow to clarify this question 243 . Fulfilling this order, the German ambassador F.-W. von Schulenburg 29 August, he asked Molotov whether such rumors were true, and conveyed Berlin's wish for their refutation in the press. Molotov asked whether the Germans believed such rumors. government, and, after a negative answer from Schulenburg, agreed to give a refutation and emphasized the seriousness with which the Soviet government regards the pact on non-aggression 244 . On August 30, a refutation of TASS appeared in the Soviet press, according to which "in view of the aggravation of the situation in the eastern regions of Europe and in view of the possibility any surprises, the Soviet command decided to strengthen the strength garrisons of the western borders of the USSR"245 .

On September 1, at 11 o'clock, the counselor of the German embassy in Moscow, G. Hilger and announced the beginning of the war with Poland, the annexation of Danzig to Germany and conveyed the request of the Chief of the General Staff of the German Air Force that the radio station in Minsk in free time from transmissions transmitted for urgent aeronautical experiments a continuous line interspersed with the call signs "Richard Wilhelm 1.0", and in addition In addition, during the broadcasts of their program, the word "Minsk" is often used whenever possible. Soviet the party agreed to transfer only the word "Minsk", which was used by the Luftwaffe in as a radio beacon 246 . On September 3, the presentation of credentials took place in Berlin Soviet Ambassador to Germany A.A. Shkvartsev. At the ceremony, Shkvartsev and Hitler were assured each other on behalf of their countries, that they will fulfill their obligations under the treaty on non-aggression 247 . On the same day, the German embassy in Moscow received an assignment from the Minister Foreign Affairs of I. Ribbentrop to probe the intentions of the USSR regarding a possible entry of the Red Army into Poland. Molotov replied to this request on 5 September that The Soviet government agrees that at the right time it "will definitely have to... start concrete action. But we believe that this moment is not yet ripe," and "haste can spoil the matter and facilitate the rallying of opponents"249.

The attitude of the Soviet leadership to the outbreak of war in Europe was clearly expressed I.V. Stalin on September 7, 1939 in a conversation with the leadership of the Comintern. In his opinion, "a war is going on between two groups of capitalist countries (poor and rich in in relation to colonies, raw materials, etc.) for the redistribution of the world, for domination over the world! We are not away so that they fight well and weaken each other. Not bad if by the hands of Germany the position of the richest capitalist countries (especially England) will be shaken. Hitler, without understanding or wanting this himself, upsets, undermines the capitalist system... We can maneuver, push one side against the other to better torn apart. The non-aggression pact helps Germany to some extent. The next moment is to push the other side "250. Germany received more than financial assistance. On September 4, all German ships in the North Atlantic received the order "to proceed to Murmansk, adhering to the northern course as much as possible" 251 . 6

September, the German Foreign Ministry reported to Moscow: "We intend to continue to send German merchant ships to Murmansk and we expect the Soviet government to facilitate unloading, loading and transportation of goods by rail to Leningrad, where they will German ships to enter for loading. "On September 8, Moscow gave permission to enter German ships to Murmansk and guaranteed the transportation of goods to Leningrad<sup>252</sup>. Total in the first 17 days of September, 18 German ships took refuge in a Soviet port.

Describing Poland as a fascist state oppressing other nationalities, Stalin declared that "the destruction of this state in the present conditions would mean one less bourgeois fascist state! What would be wrong if As a result of the defeat of Poland, we will extend the socialist system to new territories and population"<sup>253</sup> Accordingly, foreign communist parties received 8-9 September, the directive of the ECCI, which noted that "a real war - imperialist, in which the bourgeoisie of all belligerent states is equally guilty. Therefore, "neither the working class, nor even the communist parties" can support this war. Tem more "the international proletariat can under no circumstances defend the fascist Poland, which rejected the help of the Soviet Union, which oppresses other nationalities"<sup>254</sup>. Accordingly, contrary to the opinion of a number of authors,<sup>255</sup> the Soviet leadership on September 5 refused to supply Poland with military materials, citing the threat of being drawn into war<sup>256</sup>.

Naturally, the Soviet leadership was not going to look indifferently at the development situation in Poland and, without any requests from Berlin, began its own military cooking. From 8 p.m. on September 2, a regime was introduced on the Soviet-Polish border increased security in connection with the German-Polish war. As directed by the chief Border Troops of the Belarusian District No. 1720, all border detachments were brought to military marching readiness<sup>257</sup> On September 3, People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR Marshal K.E. Voroshilov asked the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR to approve the delay in the dismissal of Red Army soldiers and juniors commanders for 1 month in the troops of the Leningrad (LVO), Moscow (MVO), Kalinin (KalVO), Belarusian (BOVO) and Kyiv special (KOVO) and Kharkov (HVO) military districts (total 310,632 people) and call for training camps assigned to the units Air Defense in the LVO, KalVO, BOVO and KOVO (total 26,014 people)<sup>258</sup>. Having received consent government, the people's commissar of defense gave the corresponding order on September 4.

On September 6, at about 23-24 hours, a directive was received in seven military districts People's Commissar of Defense on conducting covert mobilization ("Large training camps", BUS), which began on the morning of September 7 and was not quite organized, with a delay of 2 3 days On September 7, by decision of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, a mobilization plan for <sup>259</sup> . food allowance of the Red Army in the LVO, MVO, KalVO, BOVO, KOVO, HVO and Orlovsky (ORVO) military district, approved by the decision of the Defense Committee (KO) No. 210 of July 21, 1939, and a plan for resupplying the Red Army with clothing allowances, approved by resolution KO No. 50ss of March 3, 1939. In the districts it was proposed unbook mobilization stocks of food and grain forage. On the same day

Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR V.M. Molotov sent to the chairmen of the Council of People's Commissars of the SSR, ASSR and telegrams of the regional executive committees, in which he reported that "the military units of the LVO, MVO, KalVO, OrVO, BOVO, KOVO, HVO attract assigned staff, vehicles, horses and carts. The call is made strictly according to agendas without publication. Render assistance in every possible way."<sup>260</sup> In addition to purely military preparations, the relevant measures were adopted by the political agencies of the Red Army. On September 9, it was decided to increase circulation Red Army newspapers in the districts conducting BUS, and central newspapers for distribution in the army.

Controls of 22 infantry, 5 cavalry, 3 tank took part in the BUS corps, 98 rifle, 14 cavalry divisions, 28 tank and 3 motorized rifle divisions brigades <sup>262</sup>. In total, 2,610,136 people, 634 thousand horses, 117,439 vehicles were called up and 18,900 tractors<sup>263</sup>. On September 10, the people's commissar of defense asked to be unarmored in the military

districts conducting BUS, 50% of rubber reserves (about 8 thousand sets) to provide vehicles coming from the national economy<sup>264</sup> By Decree of the GO No. roads in the European part of the country. Civilian transportation was reduced, the railways received 500,000 tons of coal reserves, and a number of railways were appointed authorized SNKs to unload cargo. However, the military schedule was disrupted, and the railways worked unsatisfactorily<sup>265</sup>. By resolution No. 338ss of September 17, the NKVD railway guards in 7 military districts were transferred to a wartime position "to ensure uninterrupted work, on September 16, the People's Commissar of Defense asked that the mobilization railways be unbooked"<sup>266</sup>. stocks at 275 railway property bases to ensure the restoration of railways on TVD<sup>267</sup>.

On September 11, on the basis of BOVO and KOVO, the directorates of the Belarussian (commander - commander of the 2nd rank MP Kovalev) and Ukrainian (commander - commander of the 1st rank S.K. Timoshenko) fronts were formed and deployed. The Vitebsk, Bobruisk and Minsk army groups of the BOVO were deployed on September 15, 1939, respectively, into the 3rd (commander - commander V.I. Kuznetsov), 4th (commander - commander V.I. Chuikov) and 11th (commander - Divisional Commander N.V. Medvedev) of the army. In addition, according to the order of the General Staff of September 9, the management of the 10th Army (commander - Corporal Commander I.G. Zakharkin) was separated from the MVO administration, which was transferred to the Belorussian Front, where it was relocated on September 11-15, and the Konno mechanized group (KMG) (commander - commander V.I. Boldin). From the Zhytomyr, Vinnitsa, Odessa and Cavalry army groups of the KOVO, everyone participated in the Polish campaign, except for the Odessa one. On September 16, the Zhytomyr, Vinnitsa and Cavalry groups were renamed respectively Shepetovskaya (commander - division commander I.G. Sovetnikov), Volochisk (commander - commander F.I. Golikov) and Kamenetz-Podolsk (commander - commander of the 2nd rank I.V. Tyulenev). Later, after a series of renamings, they were transformed into the 5th, 6th and 12th armies, respectively. In what follows, we will denote these unions according to their numbering. On September 7-15, the troops of the Belorussian and Ukrainian fronts basically completed their mobilization and concentrated in their starting areas near the border with Poland.

On September 8, the German leadership, misled by the report of the commander of the 4th Panzer Division, announced the capture of Warsaw. The German embassy in Moscow received the following telephone message from Molotov: "I have received your message about the entry of German troops into Warsaw. Please convey my congratulations and greetings to the German government." The Soviet military attaché commander M.A. was summoned from Berlin to Moscow. Purkaev for a report on the situation in Poland. On September 9, Ribbentrop sent Schulenburg an order to resume conversations "with Molotov about the military intentions of the Soviet government" in Poland.

On September 9, People's Commissar of Defense and Chief of the General Staff Army Commander 1st Rank B.M. Shaposhnikov signed orders No. 16633 to the Military Council of the BOVO and No. 16634 to the Military Council of the KOVO, according to which it was necessary "by the end of September 11, 1939, to secretly concentrate and be ready for a decisive offensive with the aim of defeating the opposing enemy troops with a lightning strike." The troops of the Belorussian Front received the following tasks. The 3rd Army was supposed to "throw back the opposing enemy troops from the Latvian border, act in the general direction at Sventsyany station", which was to be captured by the end of September 13th. "In the future, keep in mind the mastery of Vilna." The 11th Army should "with a powerful blow break through the enemy's front and advance in the direction of Oshmyany, Lida and, by the end of September 13, reach the Molodechno-Volozhin front, by the end of September 14, capture the area of Oshmyany, Ivye. In the future, keep in mind to assist the Polotsk group in the capture of the city of Vilna, and the rest of the force



Grodno". KMG received the task of "destroying them with a powerful blow to the enemy troops and resolutely advancing in the direction of Novogrudok, Volkovysk and, by the end of September 13, reach the Delyatichi, Turets front; by the end of September 14, reach the river. Molchad on the site from its mouth to Molchad cape. In the future, keep in mind the attack on Volkovysk with a barrier against the city of Baranovichi. "The 4th Army should" act in the direction of the city of Baranovichi and by the end

of September 13 reach the front of Snov, Zhilichi. "The troops of the Ukrainian Front received the following tasks. 5 the 1st army should "advance in the direction of Rovno, Lutsk and by the end of September 14, capture the area of Rivne, Dubno; by the end of September 14, capture the Lutsk region, bearing in mind the further offensive on Vladimir-Volynsk. "The 6th Army was supposed to" inflict a powerful and decisive blow on the Polish troops and quickly advance on Cape Trembovlya, the city of Tarnopol, and the city of Lvov and by the end of September 13, go to the Ezerna area; by the end of September 14, to capture the area of Busk, Przemyshlyany, Bobrka, with the further task of capturing the city of Lvov." and quickly advance in the direction of Chortkiv, Stanislavov, and by the end of September 13, reach the river. Strypa; by the end of September 14, take possession of the Stanislavov region, with the further task of action in the direction of Stryi, Drohobych. "The Soviet troops should not" get involved in frontal battles on the fortified positions of the enemy, but, leaving barriers from the front, bypass the flanks and go to the rear, continuing to carry out the set task". The depth of operations of the troops of the fronts was established along the line of the Latvian, Lithuanian and German borders, further along the rivers Pissa, Narev, Vistula and San and along the Hungarian and Romanian borders<sup>271</sup>

However, these orders were not transmitted to the districts, because on the same day it turned out that Warsaw was not occupied by the Germans, the French troops began to advance towards the Siegfried Line on the Franco-German border, and Soviet military preparations took longer than expected. In this situation, at 4 p.m. on September 10, Molotov invited Schulenburg to his place and declared that the Red Army was taken by surprise by the rapid successes of the Wehrmacht in Poland and was not yet ready for action. Referring to the political side of the matter, Molotov stated that "the Soviet government intended to take advantage of the further advance of the German troops and declare that Poland was falling to pieces and that, as a result, the Soviet Union should come to the aid of the Ukrainians and Belorussians, who were threatened by Germany. This pretext would represent the intervention of the Soviet Union plausible in the eyes of the masses and will give the Soviet Union the opportunity not to look like an aggressor." But, according to the German news agency DNB, the impression is created of a possible German-Polish truce, which closes the way for Soviet action. Schulenburg promised to make an inquiry regarding the possibility of a truce and said that the actions of the Red Army in this situation are very important<sup>272</sup>. Naturally, the question of a truce with the Poles was not raised, which Ribbentrop reported to Moscow on September 13<sup>273</sup>.

As a result, the Soviet troops received the order to advance only on September 14, with the corresponding changes in the time of the tasks. At 04.20 on September 15, the Military Council of the Belorussian Front issued combat order No. 01, according to which "the Belarussian, Ukrainian and Polish peoples are bleeding in the war started by the ruling landlord capitalist clique of Poland with Germany. The workers and peasants of Belarus, Ukraine and Poland rose to fight against their The main forces of the Polish army were severely defeated by the German troops. The armies of the Belorussian Front went on the offensive with the dawn of September 17, 1939 with the task of assisting the insurgent workers and peasants of Belarus and Poland in overthrowing the yoke of the landowners and capitalists and preventing the capture territory of Western Belarus by Germany. The immediate task of the front is to destroy and capture the armed forces of Poland, operating east of the Lithuanian border and the Grodno line -

Kobrin". Specific tasks for the troops coincided with the order of the People's Commissar of Defense of

September 14<sup>274</sup>. On September 14, the Military Councils of the LVO, KalVO, KOVO, BOVO and the heads of the Leningrad, Belorussian and Kiev border districts of the NKVD were sent a joint directive No. 16662 of the people's commissars of defense and internal affairs on the procedure for interaction border troops and the Red Army. According to the directive "from the moment the field troops leave the areas of concentration in order to cross the state border for operations on enemy territory" and until the troops cross "the state border to a depth equal to the location of the military rear (30-50 km)", border troops, "remaining in their places, are transferred to the operational subordination of the Military Councils of the corresponding fronts and armies" until their special order.<sup>275</sup> On the evening of September 15, the commander of the Belorussian district of the border troops of the NKVD issued order No. actions - the destruction of the Polish border guard in those areas where units of the Red Army will not advance. b) with the advance of army troops - to prevent the passage of the civilian population from our territory and anyone from Polish territory across the existing state border of the USSR. Units, subdivisions and individual servicemen of the Red Army should be allowed to pass through the existing border of the USSR without hindrance. "Until 5.00 on September 17, 1939, the border guards had to carry out the service of protecting the state border as usual<sup>276</sup>

On September 8, according to order No. 001064 of the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs L.P. Beria, the formation of 5 operational-Chekist groups of 50-70 people in KOVO and 4 groups of 40-55 people in BOVO began. Each group was assigned a battalion of 300 determined on the fighters from the composition On September 15, their tasks were territory of the Western Border Troops<sup>277</sup> of Belarus and Western Ukraine. These groups were entrusted with the organization of temporary administrations in the occupied cities (with the participation of group leaders). To ensure order, suppress subversive work and suppress counter-revolutionary activities, it was necessary to create an apparatus of the NKVD in the occupied cities by separating forces from the groups. In the occupied territory, it was necessary to immediately occupy communication points (telephone, telegraph, radio, post office), state and private banks and other repositories of all kinds of valuables, printing houses, where it was necessary to organize the publication of newspapers, state archives (especially the archives of special services), arrest reactionary representatives of the government administration, leaders of counter-revolutionary parties, release political prisoners (while keeping the rest in custody), ensure public order, preventing sabotage, robbery, etc., and seize weapons and explosives from the population<sup>278</sup>

On September 16, the Military Council of the Belorussian Front issued Order No. 005, which noted that "Polish landlords and capitalists have enslaved the working people of Western Belarus and Western Ukraine ... they are instilling national oppression and exploitation ... they have thrown our Belorussian and Ukrainian brothers into the meat grinder of the second imperialist war. National oppression and enslavement of the working people led Poland to military defeat. The oppressed peoples of Poland faced the threat of complete ruin and beating by enemies. A revolutionary movement is unfolding in Western Ukraine and Belarus. the peasantry of Poland is uniting its forces in order to wring the neck of its bloody oppressors... I order: 1. Detachments of the Belorussian Front to decisively come to the aid of the working people of Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine, launching a decisive offensive along the entire front. bourgeois Polish troops and liberate the workers, peasants and on the same day the Military Council of the Ukrainian Front of the Working People of Western Belorussia"<sup>279</sup>. Directive No. A0084 set combat missions for subordinate troops.

The cessation of the French offensive in the Saar and the completion of covert mobilization in the USSR led Molotov to tell Schulenburg on September 14 that "the Red Army

reached a state of readiness sooner than expected. Soviet actions can therefore begin earlier than the time indicated by him during the last conversation. Given the political motivation of the Soviet action (the fall of Poland and the defense of the Russian "minorities"), it would be extremely important not to start acting before the administrative center of Poland, Warsaw, falls. "Therefore, Molotov asked to be informed when it could be expected to fall. On September 12, the OKW considered options for a final solution to the Polish problem, one of which included, among other things, the creation of an independent state in Galicia and Polish Ukraine. To do this, with the help of the OUN rebellions and the proclamation of an independent state in Western Ukraine should have been organized.<sup>281</sup> On September 15, the command of Army Group Sever ordered the forward units of the 19th Tank Corps to go to the Baranovichi-Slonim region (50 km from the Soviet border)<sup>282</sup>.

On September 14, Pravda placed the prepared by A.A. Zhdanov, an article in which the main reasons for the defeat of Poland were the oppression of the Ukrainian and Belarusian national minorities<sup>283</sup> This article became the programmatic document of Soviet propaganda to justify the actions of the USSR against Poland, and its ideas were immediately taken as the basis of political work in the Red Army<sup>284</sup>, as well as the idea social movements in Poland. Thus, the head of the Political Directorate of the 3rd Army of the Belorussian Front, Brigadier Commissar Shulin, in Directive No. 8499ss of September 16, noted that the Belarusian and Ukrainian peoples, subjected to national and social oppression in Poland, "revolted to fight their age-old enemies, the landowners and capitalists. The peoples of the Soviet Unions cannot be indifferent to the revolutionary liberation struggle of the working people of Poland... The fighters, commanders and political workers of the 3rd Army were lucky enough to be the first to provide military assistance to the peoples of Poland in their liberation struggle against the landlords and capitalists. not as conquerors, but as revolutionary liberators nurtured by the great party of Lenin-Stalin"<sup>285</sup> The directive of the Military Council and the Political Directorate of the 12th Army stated that "our struggle against the Polish landlords and capitalists is a revolutionary and just war. We are entering our land, let's go and liberate the working people from the yoke of Polish capitalism"<sup>286</sup>. The task of the forthcoming campaign, as it was intelligibly explained to the commanding staff, was that "the lord's Poland should become Soviet" <sup>287</sup> and Belarusians. Rallies were held in the units, at which the fighters and commanders

supported the decision of the Soviet government on a liberation campaign. The general opinion was: "The time has come to liberate the working people - our brothers Ukrainians, Belarusians from the oppression of the Polish pans. Let us swear, comrades, that we will beat the enemy as we destroyed him during the civil war." Thus, Ivashkin, a Red Army soldier of the artillery division of the 3rd Cavalry Division, believed that "we will fulfill our international duty and multiply the number of Soviet republics." Varlamov, a Red Army soldier of the 22nd tank brigade, declared: "I am ready to march all the way to Berlin, if only to free the working people from the yoke of capital." As stated, speaking at a rally in the 11th Cavalry Division, the commander of the 3rd Cavalry Corps, Divisional Commander A.I. Eremenko: "The First Cavalry Army in 1920 beat the Polish lords, they should remember this very well, now we have to beat 10 times more and for the last time." In the troops of the 23rd Rifle Corps, voices were heard: "More cartridges, but a wider step. They have been waiting for us there for 20 years" <sup>288</sup>

In an effort to demonstrate to Britain and France that German actions in Poland were supported by the USSR, Berlin continued to call on Moscow to bring the Red Army into action. In a telegram to Moscow dated September 15, Ribbentrop reported that the fall of Warsaw was a matter of a few days, once again confirmed the inviolability of

border lines in Poland, agreed in Moscow, approved the planned entry of Soviet troops into Poland, which, in his opinion, freed the Wehrmacht from the need to pursue the Poles to the Soviet border, asked to be informed of the day and hour of the border crossing by Soviet troops, to coordinate the actions of the troops, he proposed to hold a meeting Soviet and German officers in Bialystok and proposed a joint communique: "In view of the complete collapse of the form of government that previously existed in Poland, the imperial government and the government of the USSR considered it necessary to put an end to the intolerable political and economic situation that exists in the Polish territories. They consider it their common duty to restore these territories, which are of natural interest to them, peace and tranquility and the establishment of a new order there by drawing natural boundaries and creating viable economic institutions. Moscow's attempt to explain its intervention as a German threat to the Belarusian and Ukrainian population caused a sharply negative reaction from Berlin. At the same time, in an effort to push the Soviet government to send troops into Poland, Ribbentrop suggested that Schulenburg point out to Molotov that "if Russian intervention is not launched, the question will inevitably arise whether there will be created in the area lying east of the German zone of influence, political vacuum", creating "conditions for the formation of new states"<sup>289</sup>. On the evening of September 16, Molotov told Schulenburg that the Soviet

government had decided to intervene in Polish affairs tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, and he would soon be able to accurately name the day and hour. Molotov, who knew from intelligence about Schulenburg's assignment,<sup>290</sup> rejected the proposal to publish a joint communiqué proposed by the German side, which presented the Soviet side as a direct ally of Germany, and gave a brief explanation of the USSR's actions, which would be indicated in the press: "The Polish state has collapsed and no longer exists, therefore all agreements concluded with Poland are annulled; third powers can try to profit from the resulting chaos; the Soviet Union considers it its duty to intervene to protect its Ukrainian and Belarusian brothers and give this unfortunate population the opportunity to work. At 2 am on September 17, Stalin received Schulenburg and said, that it is calm"<sup>291</sup> The Red Army will German cross the border with Poland at 6 o'clock in the morning, and the joint Soviet-communiqué cannot be published earlier than in 2-3 days. Stalin asked Schulenburg to send it to Berlin so that German planes would not fly east of the Bialystok Brest-Lvov line, and read out a note prepared for transmission to the Polish ambassador in Moscow. After some clarification of its text, made at the suggestion of Schulenburg, the German ambassador was satisfied and left the Kremlin<sup>292</sup>. At 3.15 am on September 17, the Polish ambassador in Moscow, W. Grzybowski, was handed a note from the

Soviet government, which stated that "the Polish state and its government actually ceased to exist. Thus, the treaties concluded between the USSR and Poland ceased to be valid. Left to itself and left without leadership, Poland has become a convenient field for all sorts of accidents and surprises that could pose a threat to the USSR. Therefore, being hitherto neutral, the Soviet government can no longer be neutral about these facts, "and also about the defenseless position of the Ukrainian and Belarusian population. "In view of this situation, the Soviet government ordered the High Command of the Red Army to order the troops to cross the border and take under their protection the lives and property of the population of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus"<sup>293</sup>. The Polish ambassador refused "to accept the note, because it would be incompatible with the dignity of the Polish government." As a result, the note was handed over to the embassy while Grzybowski was in the NKID<sup>294</sup>. On the same day, the text of this note was also transmitted to all states that had diplomatic relations with the USSR, with the notification that the USSR would continue to remain neutral in relation to these countries<sup>295</sup>. This argumentation of the Soviet intervention in the events in Poland

was repeated in Molotov's radio speech on September 17 and in his speech at the session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR October 31, 1939<sup>296</sup>

Almost all modern authors condemn the then assertions of the Soviet guides on the collapse of Poland and the cessation of its existence, but at the same time some of them operate with precisely this argumentation. A.S. Orlov believes that since the USSR introduced troops at the moment when the Polish government lost control of the country, and the government in exile had not yet been established, then international law was observed<sup>298</sup>. From these considerations it is not clear why at the time of the change of government international law does not apply, and also what does the question of the government's ability to run the country? Some authors associate the moment of input Soviet troops to Poland with the signing of the Soviet-Japanese agreement on the termination of hostilities on the river Khalkhin-Gol, which, in their opinion, provided the rear of the USSR in the East<sup>299</sup>.

By the evening of September 16, the troops of the Belorussian and Ukrainian fronts were deployed in starting areas for the offensive. The Soviet grouping united 8 rifle, 5 cavalry and 2 tank corps, 21 rifle and 13 cavalry divisions, 16 tank, 2 motorized brigades and the Dnieper military flotilla (DVF) (see. table 6-300). Available data on the number of these groups are presented in table 7, and the air forces of the fronts, taking into account the 1st, 2nd and 3rd special purpose aviation armies numbered 3,298 aircraft<sup>301</sup>. In addition, on about 16.5 thousand border guards of the Belarussian and Kyiv border districts<sup>302</sup>. After the concentration of additional forces by the beginning of October fronts united 60 rifle, 13 cavalry divisions and 18 tank brigades with a total 2,421,300 men, 5,467 medium and heavy guns, 6,096 tanks and 3,727 aircraft<sup>303</sup>.

For the Polish leadership, the intervention of the USSR was completely unexpected. Polish intelligence did not record any threatening movements of the Red Army, but information received on September 1-5 was perceived as an understandable reaction to the outbreak of war in Europe. And although on September 12 information was received from Paris about a possible speech USSR against Poland, they were not taken seriously<sup>304</sup>. On the eastern border of Poland except for 25 battalions and 7 border guard squadrons (about 12 thousand people, or 8 soldiers for 1 km of the border) <sup>305</sup> there were practically no other troops, which was good known to Soviet intelligence. So, according to intelligence data of the 4th Army, "the border strip to the river Shchara is not occupied by field troops, and the KOP battalions, due to their combat training and combat capability is weak ... Serious resistance from the Polish army to the river. Shchara hardly likely to be expected from the ... As a result, on September 17, the Polish leadership turned out to be Poles"<sup>307</sup>. faced with a fait accompli and, based on the statements of the Soviet government and his notes, believed that the Red Army was introduced in order to limit the zone of the German occupation. Therefore, Rydz-Smigly gave the order "not to conduct military operations with the Soviets, only in the event of an attempt on their part to disarm our units. A challenge for Warsaw and Modlin, which must defend against the Germans, unchanged. Parts, to location approached by the Soviets, must negotiate with them with a view to leaving the garrisons in Romania or Hungary "<sup>308</sup>. The

actions of the USSR against Poland in September 1939 are assessed in the national historiography is contradictory. Some authors believe they were predestined agreement with Germany on the division of spheres of interest in Eastern Europe<sup>309</sup>. According to others, the successful actions of the Wehrmacht in Poland and its rapid defeat turned out to be surprise for the Soviet leadership, which was forced to take response measures <sup>310</sup>. The threat to Soviet borders increased, fears arose that Germany would not abide by the pact, and therefore the USSR had to send in troops<sup>311</sup>. Indeed, these authors do not explain why, in this case, the German leadership so insistently invited USSR to occupy Eastern Poland. According to M.I. Semiryaghi, puff with introduction Red Army to Poland was associated with the need for psychological preparation

population, fears of a clash with England and France, the need to calm world public opinion and the expectation of the fall of Warsaw. In the Soviet press, the author notes, an anti-Polish campaign was launched, Polish diplomats in the USSR became the object of close observation by the NKVD and on September 17 they were repressed. According to some authors, on September 17, 1939, the Soviet Union violated all its agreements with Poland and committed aggression against it<sup>312</sup>. Pointing to the military cooperation between the Wehrmacht and the Red Army in Poland, a number of authors conclude that on September 17, 1939, the Soviet Union actually entered World War II on the side of Germany<sup>313</sup>. Whether this conclusion is justified, we will see by considering subsequent events. At 05:00 on September 17, the advanced and assault

detachments of the Soviet armies and border troops crossed the border and defeated the Polish border guard. Crossing the border confirmed the data of Soviet intelligence about the absence of significant groupings of Polish troops, which made it possible to accelerate the offensive. By the end of the first day of the operation on the front of the 3rd Army, the 25th Tank Brigade went to the Glubokoe area, and the 24th Cavalry Division and the 22nd Tank Brigade to the Dunilovichi area - Zarezhye. Despite the difficulties in supplying troops due to non-deployed rear units, on the morning of September 18, the army troops continued the offensive, and by the end of the day the mobile group occupied Svetsiany, the 25th tank brigade reached the Godutsishek region, and the 27th rifle division entered the lake area Myadel and Naroch.

To the south, the troops of the 11th Army, by the end of September 17, advanced to Volozhin and Konstantinovka, approached Krasnoy and occupied Molodechno with advanced units. By the end of September 18, the 7th cavalry division reached Golshany, and the 36th cavalry division of the Oshmyany region reached Kurmelyany. The 16th Rifle Corps was in the area of Glinka - Krevo - Veynyuny, and the 6th Tank Brigade approached Vilnius from the south and started fighting on the outskirts of the city with Polish units and city militias. On the morning of September 19, the mobile units of the 3rd Army approached Vilna (Vilnius) from the west and, together with the 6th Tank Brigade and the advance units of the 3rd Cavalry Corps of the 11th Army, stormed the city, which was occupied for about 13 hours. In the battles for Vilna, units of the 11th Army lost 13 people killed and 24 people wounded, 5 tanks and 4 armored vehicles were hit. The rifle divisions of the 3rd Army, following the moving units, advanced to the line of the Latvian and Lithuanian borders. On September 19, a motorized group of the 16th Rifle Corps of the 11th Army occupied Lida.

While the troops of the 3rd and 11th armies occupied the northeastern part of Western Belarus, units of the KMG went on the offensive to the south. By the end of September 17, the 6th Cavalry Corps crossed the river. Wushu, and the 5th Rifle Corps entered the line of the Baranovichi-Stolbtsy railway. The advance detachment of the 11th Cavalry Division occupied Novogrudok, and the 15th Tank Corps approached Slonim. The next day, the 21st Tank Brigade and the 6th Cavalry Corps crossed the river. Silent and reached the area of Kozlovshchina, the 15th tank corps occupied Slonim and advanced 10-15 km west of the city, and the 5th rifle corps reached the river. Shut up. On September 19, the 15th tank corps, due to lack of fuel, remained in the occupied area, and the 6th cavalry corps crossed the river. Shchara and moved towards Volkovysk. On September 20, the 15th Panzer Corps occupied Volkovysk, from where the tank brigades, together with the 4th Cavalry Division, were sent to Grodno and occupied the southern part of the city by evening. Fighting broke out in the city with Polish units and militias, which lasted all day on September 21. Meanwhile, the 2nd tank brigade occupied Sokulka, and its advance detachment, bypassing Grodno, moved to Augustow. The 11th Cavalry Division and the 5th Rifle Corps advanced west and southw

On the front of the 4th Army, by the end of the first day of the offensive, the 29th Tank Brigade occupied Baranovichi and the fortified area located here, which was not occupied by Polish troops, and the 8th Infantry Division advanced to Snuva. By the end of September 18, the 29th and 32nd tank brigades reached the river. Shchara south of Slonim, and the 8th Infantry Division passed Baranovichi. By the end of September 19, the 29th tank brigade entered Pruzhany, the 32nd tank brigade entered Minki on the Baranovichi-Brest highway, the 8th rifle division reached the river. Shchara, and the approaching 143rd Rifle Division made a march south of Baranovichi. E

September, the 29th tank brigade was located west of Pruzhany, the 32nd tank brigade - in Kobrin, the 8th rifle division - in Ruzhany, the 143rd rifle division - in Ivatsevichi.

On September 18, the concentrated troops of the 10th Army also crossed the border, which reached the Neman and Usha rivers by the end of the day. Continuing the slow advance in the second echelon of the Belorussian Front, by the end of September 20, the army troops reached the Novogrudok-Gorodishche line. To the south, the troops of the 23rd Rifle Corps crossed the border at 16.25 on September 18 and by the end of September 20 they advanced west of Luninets.

The troops of the Ukrainian Front also crossed the Polish border on September 17 and began to move deep into Poland. On September 18, the 36th tank brigade of the 5th army occupied Lutsk, and the rifle divisions reached the line Rokitnoye Kostopol - Rivne - Dubno. On September 21, the 60th Rifle Division, after stubborn battles, broke through the Sarnensky UR and occupied the city of Sarny. By the end of September 22, the troops of the 5th Army reached the line Kovel - Rozhitsa - Vladimir Volynsky Ivanichi. In

the zone of the 6th Army at 4.00 on September 17, an assault group of border guards and Red Army soldiers captured the Volochinsky border bridge, along which the troops went. On the evening of September 17, Tarnopol was occupied and the troops moved towards Lvov, which on September 12-18 was captured by the Wehrmacht from the north, west and south. At 1.35 on September 19, the advance detachment of the 24th Tank Brigade entered the city, and after negotiations, a skirmish with the Poles began. At about 0800, on the eastern outskirts of Lvov, a Soviet unit collided with a Wehrmacht unit that was skirting the city from the southeast. Both sides decided that the Poles were in front of them, and opened fire. During the skirmish, the Germans lost 3 anti-tank guns, 3 people were killed and 9 wounded, and the Soviet units lost 1 tank, 2 armored vehicles, 3 were killed and 4 soldiers were wounded. Having understood the situation, the parties began negotiations, during which they demanded that each other withdraw troops from the city and not interfere with its assault. By the evening of September 20, German troops received an order to withdraw from Lvov, and on the night of September 21, Soviet troops took up starting positions for an attack on the city, scheduled for 14.00 on September 21. But the Poles offered negotiations, and the attack was postponed for a day. Meanwhile, the 14th Cavalry Division occupied the northern suburbs of the city, and at 08:00 on September 22, the Polish commander, General Lyangner, signed the act of surrendering the city, and at 14:00 on September 22, the Red Army occupied

Lvov. The troops of the 12th Army crossed the border at 5.00 on September 17 and by the end of September 18 they reached the front of Podgaitsy - Monastyriska, and the 13th Rifle Corps occupied Kolomyia, cutting off Poland from Romania. On September 19, the army troops fought with the Polish troops near Galich and occupied Stanislavov. On September 20, in the Stryi region, troops came into contact with the Germans, who on September 22 handed over the city to the Red Army. From September 21, the troops of the 13th Rifle Corps were deployed along the border with Romania and Hungary from

Immediately after the entry of the Red Army into Poland, a new round of diplomatic negotiations with Germany began in Moscow. Already on the evening of September 18, in a conversation with Schulenburg, Stalin unexpectedly announced that "the Soviet side has certain doubts as to whether the German high command will adhere to the Moscow agreement at the appropriate time and whether it will return to the line that was determined in Moscow." Schulenburg replied that "Germany, of course, is determined to comply with the terms of the Moscow agreements." To this, Stalin stated that "he has no doubts about the good intentions of the German government. His concern was based on the well-known fact that all military men hate to return the occupied territories" 315 . German diplomats categorically rejected his fears and stated that the Wehrmacht was subject to the orders of the Führer and all agreements with Moscow would be strictly observed. On September 19, a Soviet-German communiqué was published: "In order to avoid all sorts of unfounded rumors about the tasks of the Soviet and German troops

operating in Poland, the government of the USSR and the government of Germany declare that the actions of these troops do not pursue any goal that runs counter to the interests of Germany

or the Soviet Union and contrary to the spirit and letter of the non-aggression pact concluded between Germany and the USSR. The task of these troops, on the contrary, is to restore in Poland, order and tranquility, disturbed by the collapse of the Polish state, and to help population of Poland to reorganize the conditions of their state existence"<sup>316</sup>.

On the evening of September 19, Molotov summoned Schulenburg and told him that "the chief operational department of the Wehrmacht Warlimont showed yesterday to the acting Soviet military attache in Berlin map showing the future "Reich border".

It runs along the Vistula, goes through Warsaw, but then it is plotted so that Lvov remains on the German side." This is contrary to the Moscow agreements and is surprising the Soviet government. Schulenburg replied that there had been a misunderstanding, since the map apparently showed a temporary demarcation line, however, he requested Berlin instructions<sup>317</sup>. On the same day, Molotov told Schulenburg that both It is time for governments to finally determine the structure of Polish territories. If earlier the Soviet government intended to preserve the existence of the remnants of Poland, now it is ready to divide Poland along the line of four rivers. "The Soviet government wants immediately begin negotiations on this issue and hold them in Moscow, since such negotiations with the Soviet side must be conducted by persons endowed with supreme power, not able to leave the Soviet Union"<sup>318</sup>.

Having received at 2.00 on September 17 a message about the crossing of the Polish border by the Red Army, the German command at 7.00 ordered the troops to stop on the line Skole - Lvov - Vladimir-Volynsky - Brest Bialystok<sup>319</sup> On September 20, Hitler established the "final demarcation line" to which the German troops were to retreat: Uzhoksky pass Khyrov - Przemyśl - r. San - r. Vistula - r. Narew - r. Pissa - the border of the Reich<sup>320</sup>. IN On the evening of the same day, Molotov, in a conversation with Schulenburg, declared that the Soviet government cannot approve this line from Przemyśl to Turka and the Uzhok pass, but insists on lines along the upper reaches of the river. San. It must be taken into account that this is Ukrainian territory. In exchange for her the Soviet government is "ready to cede Suwalki and the surrounding area with the railway, but not Augustow "<sup>321</sup>. In addition, Molotov proposed the text of the Soviet-German communiqué, which caused no objections in Berlin. The German side agreed to transfer to it Suwalki in exchange for territory along the upper reaches of the San River, but also tried to get Augustow with surrounding forests<sup>322</sup>.

The German and Soviet command maintained contacts through the military Attaché<sup>323</sup>. On the morning of September 20, 1939, the German military attache in Moscow, General Lieutenant E. Kestring, tried to resolve the situation near Lvov. German first the command stated that they could not withdraw the troops, and offered to take the city jointly storm with the Red Army, and then transfer it to the Soviet side. However, intransigence Moscow led to the fact that the German leadership decided to "act in conjunction with Russians", and it was decided that "German troops will clear Lvov"<sup>324</sup> At 12.45 Kestring arrived at Voroshilov and said that, by Hitler's personal decree, the Wehrmacht would be withdrawn for 10 km west of Lviv. "As agreed in the presence of Ribbentrop, the line of the Piss rivers, Narew, Vistula, San will not be disputed by anyone. The map shown by the boss operational management Varlimont Belyakov, had a border line not in accordance with agreement between the Soviet and German sides, and it cannot be considered a border line, but only the line that the German troops must occupy. To the remark of the

People's Commissar of Defense that on the map of Varlimont, which he showed to Belyakov, there was a border line drawn from Warsaw along the Vistula and further east of Lvov, Kestring, obviously embarrassed and in a joking tone, said that Warlimont was not a politician and, it is possible that he, as an oil worker, was tempted by oil, but that because of this they did not allow themselves to violate the agreement reached and that it was a small incident. Kestring was instructed that today our troops will occupy the cities of Grodno, Bialystok, Lvov, Tukhlovsky pass and that German troops should be withdrawn from this line today, about which request to immediately notify the German command. "Voroshilov drew



Koestring's attention to the inadmissibility of incidents like Lvov's, since "this beneficial only to a third party, and from this all sorts of correspondents can inflate a big hype". Kestring agreed and "asked today to outline the boundaries and deadlines that must be left by the German troops ... We agreed that today at 16 o'clock comrade. Voroshilov will take Kestring and the arriving officers to develop milestones and deadlines withdrawal of the German army.

On September 20, 1939, at 16:20, negotiations began between Voroshilov and Shaposhnikov with representatives of the German military command represented by General Kestring, Colonel G. Aschenbrenner and Lieutenant Colonel G. Krebs on the procedure for withdrawal German troops and the advance of Soviet troops to the demarcation line.

Initially, it was assumed that the movement of the Red Army to the west would begin on the morning of 23 September, the troops will have to move at 25 km intervals, and by the evening of October 3 German troops will withdraw beyond the final demarcation line<sup>326</sup> During of the next round of negotiations from 2 to 4 am on September 21, the dates for reaching the demarcation line and the Soviet-German protocol was signed: "1. The Red Army units remain on the line they reached by 20 o'clock on September 20 1939, and continue their movement to the west again at dawn on September 23, 1939.

2. Parts of the German army, starting from September 22, are withdrawn in such a way that, making a transition every day, approximately 20 kilometers, to complete your retreat to the western bank of the river the Vistula at Warsaw by the evening of October 3 and at Deblin by the evening of October 2; to the western bank of the river Pissa by the evening of September 27, p. Narew, at Ostrolenok, by the evening of September 29 and at Pultusk by the evening of October 1; to the west bank of the river. San, near Przemysl, by the evening of September 26 and to the west bank of the river. San, near Sanok and to the south, by the evening

of September 28. 3. The movement of the troops of both armies must be organized in such a way that there was a distance between the advanced parts of the Red Army columns and the tail of the columns The German army, on average up to 25 kilometers.

Both sides organize their movement in such a way that the units of the Red Army leave by the evening of September 28 on the eastern bank of the river. Pissa; by the evening of 30 September east bank of the river Narew at Ostrolek and by the evening of October 2 at Pultusk; to the east coast R. Vistula at Warsaw by the evening of October 4 and at Deblin by the evening of October 3; to the east coast R. San at Przemysl by the evening of September 27 and on the eastern bank of the river. San near Sanok and south to evening of 29 September.

4. All questions that may arise during the transfer by the German army and acceptance Red Army districts, points, cities, etc., are allowed by representatives of both sides in place, for which on each main highway of movement of both armies special delegates are allocated by the command.

In order to avoid possible provocations, sabotage from Polish gangs, etc., the German the command takes the necessary measures in the cities and places that are transferred to the units the Red Army, to their safety, and special attention is paid to the fact that the cities, towns and important military defensive and economic structures (bridges, airfields, barracks, warehouses, railway junctions, railway stations, telegraph, telephone, power plants, rolling stock, etc.), both in them and on the way to them, would be preserved from damage and destruction until the transfer to their representatives of parts Red Army. 5. When

the German representatives addressed the Command of the Red Army about assistance in the destruction of Polish units or gangs that stand in the way of the movement small parts of the German troops, the Command of the Red Army (chiefs of columns), in if necessary, allocate the necessary forces to ensure the destruction obstacles in the way of movement.

6. When moving to the west of the German troops, the aviation of the German army can fly only up to the line of the rearguards of the columns of the German troops and at an altitude of not more than 500 meters,

aviation of the Red Army when moving to the west of the columns of the Red Army can only fly to the line of the vanguards of the Red Army columns and at an altitude of no higher than 500 meters.

According to the occupation by both armies of the main demarcation line along the river. Pissa, Narew, Vistula, r. San from mouth to source, aviation of both armies does not fly over the above line"327 On .

September 21 at 13.50, the Department of Foreign Relations of NGOs was visited by General Kestring, Colonel Ashenbrenner and Lieutenant Colonel Krebs and reported that in view of the ongoing fighting near Warsaw and west of Lvov "Commander-in-Chief General Brauchitsch asks for all the named time limits for the withdrawal of troops in our joint protocol of 21 September, delay for 24 hours, and in the direction of Pultusk until the evening of October 4. It is caused and necessary time for the removal of the wounded and prisoners. General Brauchitsch wants to withdraw his troops in the shortest possible time, but not to the detriment of organization and order. In that The Soviet command must also be interested. Commander-in-Chief of the German troops said that he had taken measures to preserve the most important objects on the transferred territory of the Red Army "328. Corresponding changes were made in protocol329.

At the same time, on September 20-22, a Soviet-German communiqué was agreed, and on September 23 published: "The German government and the government of the USSR established demarcation line between the German and Soviet armies, which runs along the river Pissa before its confluence with the Narew River, then along the Narew River until its confluence with the Bug River, then along the Bug River until its confluence with the Vistula River, then along the Vistula River until the San River flows into it and further along the San River to its sources "330 .

At 10.30 September 21, the headquarters of the Belorussian and Ukrainian fronts received order of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 16693, demanding to stop the troops on the line, reached by advanced units by 20.00 September 20. The troops were tasked to pull up the stragglers and the rear, to establish a stable connection, to be in a state of full combat readiness, be vigilant and take measures to protect the rear and headquarters. In addition, the command of the Belorussian Front was allowed to continue the offensive in Suwalki salient 331 . Order At 22.15 September 21 to the headquarters of the Belarussian and Ukrainian fronts No. 156 of the People's Commissar of Defense was received, which set out the content of the Soviet-German protocol332. The next day, the Military Council of the Belorussian Front gave corresponding order No. 05333 .

On the night of September 22, the Polish defenders of Grodno left the city, and in the morning it was occupied by Soviet units, for whom the battles for the city cost 57 killed, 159 wounded, there were 19 tanks and 4 armored vehicles were knocked out. The 6th Cavalry Division took Bialystok from the Germans, and the 11th the cavalry division reached the Kryuki-Bialostotsky area. The troops of the 3rd and 11th armies continued guard the Latvian and Lithuanian borders. On the southern sector of the front, the troops of the 4th Army accepted from the Germans Brest, which hosted the now widely known parade of Soviet and German troops marching in front of the podium, on which General G. Guderian and brigade commander S.M. Krivoshein (future Hero of the Soviet Union, who reached Berlin). On September 23, units of the 27th Tank Brigade occupied Suwalki. 11th Army started redeployment along the Lithuanian border to Grodno, and the 10th Army continued to advance to the west in the second echelon of the front. On September 25, the troops received a directive from the people's commissar defense No. 011 and the order of the Military Council of the Belorussian Front No. 06, warning that "during the movement of the army from the reached line Augustow - Bialystok Brest-Litovsk west to territory left by the German army, it is possible that the Poles will crumble collect units into detachments and gangs, which, together with the Polish troops operating near Warsaw, they can offer us stubborn resistance and in places inflict counterattacks "334.

In agreement with the German command, the troops of the Belorussian Front steadily moving west. By September 26-27, the troops of the 3rd and 11th armies entrenched themselves on border with Lithuania and East Prussia to Shchuchin. To the south on the Gonyondz - Knyshin front

the 20th motorized rifle and 6th tank brigades deployed. The 6th and 11th cavalry divisions reached Vysoka Mazowiecka, and the 13th and 4th rifle divisions deployed on the front south of Bialystok to the river. Narew. The 8th Infantry Division from the 4th Army crossed the river. Western Bug and took Biala Podlaska from the Germans. By September 28-29, the troops advanced to the line of Shchuchin Staviski - Lomza - Zambruv - Ciechanowiec - Kosuv-Latski - Sokoluv-Podlaski Losice - Mendzizhets-Podlaski.

On the Ukrainian front, the troops of the 5th Army, having resumed their advance on September 23, broke the resistance of the Polish units on the river. The Western Bug at the Hill and on September 30 were stopped on the line Pugaczow - Piaski - Piotrkow Krzemen - Bilgoraj. The troops of the 6th Army, which resumed their advance to the west from September 25, by the end of September 26, reached the Rava-Russian Nemirov - Yavorov - Rudki front. By September 28, the army troops reached the middle course of the river. San from Bilgoraj to Przemyśl. On September 24, the troops of the 12th Army began to advance to the west, taking Drohobych from the Germans. On September 26, the advance detachment of the 16th Cavalry Division arrived at the Beskid station, which, as it turned out, was occupied on September 23 by Hungarian troops. An attempt to contact the Hungarians caused them to fire from hand weapons. The return artillery fire of Soviet armored vehicles led to the cessation of firing and the withdrawal of Hungarian soldiers into the railway tunnel on the border. According to local residents, the tunnel was mined; The situation on this section of the by the 4th Cavalry Corps and the 26th border with Hungary was normalized on September 27 Tank Brigade after negotiations<sup>335</sup>. fought with the Poles at Zhuravinets. On September 28, the 5th Cavalry Corps

reached the upper reaches of the river. San and on the border with Hungary. In the meantime, on September 23, Ribbentrop informed Moscow of his readiness to come for negotiations and requested a convenient time for this. The Soviet government proposed on September 27-28, and, given the mood of the ruling circles of England and France regarding the "Curzon Line", already on the evening of September 25, Stalin and Molotov handed over to Schulenburg a proposal to discuss the transfer of Lithuania to the Soviet sphere of interests at future negotiations, and in return they were ready to refuse from part of the Warsaw and Lublin voivodeships to the Bug. Stalin said that if the Germans agree to this, then "the USSR will immediately take up the solution of the problem of the Baltic states, in accordance with the protocol of August 23, and expects in this matter the full support of the

At 6 pm on September 27, Ribbentrop arrived in Moscow. The first conversation with Molotov took place from 10 p.m. to 1 a.m. in the presence of Stalin, Schulenburg and Shkvartsev. During the negotiations on the issue of the final drawing of the border on the territory of Poland, Ribbentrop, referring to the fact that Poland was "completely defeated by the German armed forces," sought to retain Germany's oil production areas in the upper reaches of the river. San and forests near Augustow and Bialystok. Referring to the danger of the division of the Polish population, which could give rise to unrest and pose a threat to both states, Stalin proposed leaving the territory of ethnographic Poland in the hands of Germany. Regarding the German wishes to change the line of state interests in the south and north, Stalin, diverting them, offered to supply Germany with up to 500 thousand tons of oil in exchange for supplies of coal and steel pipes as compensation. As a result, the territorial issue was reduced to two options. According to the first, everything remained as it was decided on August 23rd. According to the second, Germany ceded Lithuania and received for this the areas east of the Vistula up to the Bug and Suwalki without Augustow. In addition, Ribbentrop insisted on the transfer of part of the territory of Lithuania in the area of Mariampol to Germany<sup>337</sup>.

Reporting to Berlin on the results of the negotiations, Ribbentrop, after evaluating the options for resolving the territorial issue, noted that he could not determine which of them was more beneficial to Germany. In his opinion, the first option is supported by the fact that "having Lithuania in our hands, we will expand the German colonization zone in the northeast." Against this is the fact that the division of the Polish population may create the possibility of friction between Germany and the USSR. The second option is supported by the fact that the accession of the entire Polish population excludes political intrigues for the violation of German-Soviet relations and gives

the opportunity to solve the national-political problem at the discretion of Germany. Against this, it can be objected that in this way the USSR is freed from the international Polish problem. Ribbentrop asked Hitler to inform him of the preferred option before 1200 German time on September 28, otherwise he would be forced to decide for himself<sup>338</sup>.

The next day, from 15:00 to 18:30, a second conversation was held in the Kremlin, during which it became clear that Hitler generally approved the second option for resolving the territorial issue. After that, from 24.00 to 05.00 on September 29, a specific discussion of the line of the border was held. The Soviet side abandoned the territory between the Nareva and Bug rivers east of the Ostrov-Ostrolenka line, and the German side slightly moved the border to the north in the area of Rava-Russkaya and Lyubachuva. A long discussion around Przemyśl did not lead to any results, and the city remained divided into two parts along the river. As a result, the "border between mutual state interests on the territory of the former Polish state" was agreed upon, which was fixed in the German-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Border (Article 1). This border was recognized as final, and the intervention of third powers in this decision was rejected (Art. 2); the parties were to engage in the state reorganization of the annexed territories (Art. 3) and considered this reorganization as "a reliable foundation for the further development of friendly relations between their peoples" (Art. 4)<sup>339</sup>. In addition to the agreement, a confidential protocol was signed on the resettlement of

Germans living in the sphere of Soviet interests to Germany, and Ukrainians and Belarusians living in the sphere of German interests to the USSR, and two secret additional protocols. In one of them, the parties assumed obligations not to allow "any Polish agitation" and to cooperate in the suppression of such agitation. In accordance with another protocol, Lithuania was transferred to the sphere of interests of the USSR in exchange for Lublin and part of the Warsaw Voivodeship, which were transferred to Germany. After the adoption by the Soviet government of measures to ensure its interests in Lithuania, part of the Lithuanian territory in the south-west of the country was to go to Germany<sup>340</sup>. Later, on October 4, a protocol was signed in Moscow describing the border from the river. Igorka to the Uzhoksky pass<sup>341</sup>, the contents of which were brought to the attention of the troops of the Belorussian and Ukrainian fronts on October 5 by telegram of the Chief of the General Staff No. 090342. The Soviet Union received a territory of 196 thousand square meters. km (50.4% of the territory of Poland) with a population of about 13

million people.

On September 28, both governments made a joint statement: "After the treaty signed today, the German Government and the Government of the USSR have finally settled the issues that arose as a result of the collapse of the Polish state, and thus created a solid foundation for lasting peace in Eastern Europe, they mutually agree to express the opinion that the abolition of a real war between Germany on the one hand, and England and France on the other, would be in the interests of all peoples. Therefore, both Governments will direct their common efforts, in case of need in agreement with other friendly powers, to achieve this as soon as possible. If, however, these efforts of both Governments remain unsuccessful, then the fact will be established that England and France are responsible for the continuation of the war, and in the event of a continuation of the war, the Governments of Germany and the USSR will consult with each other on the necessary measures"<sup>343</sup>. With this statement, the German leadership sought to demonstrate Soviet-German "friendship", to put pressure on Britain and France and force them to stop the war, although it was clear that consultations did not oblige anyone to anything. In addition, Ribbentrop and Molotov exchanged letters on economic issues. At 12.40 on September 29, Ribbentrop flew to Berlin.

In the latest Russian historiography, the Soviet-German treaty of September 28, 1939, as a rule, is assessed sharply critically. According to a number of authors, since the treaty was concluded with a belligerent country, the USSR moved away from neutrality and took the path

cooperation with Germany Others point out that by signing a non-aggression pact in on the eve of the German-Polish war, the USSR supported the aggressive aspirations of Germany and was not at all neutral, but assisted Germany, helping her to defeat Poland<sup>346</sup>. In the literature, the Soviet leadership is condemned for violating international right, expressed in the establishment of the Soviet-German border in Poland without her consent (!?), changing the territory of Lithuania without its notification, planning joint anti-Polish actions and agreements on forced resettlement of the population Poland<sup>347</sup>. As positive consequences of the treaty, many authors refer to the establishment of the border along the "Curzon Line", the receipt by the USSR of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus, freedom of hands in the Baltics and the creation of a limit for German expansion in the East Europe<sup>348</sup>. Nevertheless, the prevailing opinion in historiography is that the treaty of 28 September 1939 is a political mistake. Moreover, A.D. Bogaturov believes that now the "union between Moscow and Berlin was formalized by a full-scale interstate agreement"<sup>349</sup>. M.I. Semiryaga believes that the USSR actually entered into a military-political alliance with Germany, and in the opinion of A.M. Nekrich, the Soviet-German relations from September 1939 to November 1940 were "as if unfinished military-political union"<sup>350</sup>.

First of all, it should be noted that no military-political alliance "actual" or "incomplete" was out of the question. Not to mention that neither in the pact non-aggression, neither in the treaty of September 28 was there a word about any Soviet-German alliance<sup>351</sup>. Neither Moscow nor Berlin ever considered their relations in this vein, although they allowed such propaganda statements that could be interpreted as a certain trend of further rapprochement between them. However the matter did not go further than this.

Assessing the attitude of England and France to the events of September 17, 1939, L.A. Bezymensky believes that England was on the verge of war with the Soviet Union, and V.Ya. Sipols, noting the sharply anti-Soviet reaction of the Anglo-French press, points out that government circles in England and France reacted to these events, taking into account their anti-German orientation, on the whole calmly<sup>352</sup>. Moreover, in the West, many believed that the USSR did not participate in the division of Poland, since the western regions of Ukraine and Belarus were not Polish territories and the problem of the restoration of Poland was connected only with Germany, respectively, England and France advised the Polish leadership not to declare war on the USSR<sup>353</sup>.

The new Soviet-German agreement was immediately brought to the attention of the troops, operating in Poland. At 8.00 on September 29, the headquarters of the Belarusian and Ukrainian fronts received order No. 625 to stop troops at the reached lines no later than 18.00<sup>354</sup>. In the order to the troops of the Belorussian Front No. 15 / op dated September 30, 1939, it was given approximate description of the border established by the treaty of September 28, and it was indicated that around October 5, it is planned to begin the withdrawal of troops located "to the west of established and indicated border line." The front commander ordered "now begin the withdrawal of all convoys, transports and cars east of the border, without prejudice to normal nutrition of troops. "It was allowed" to withdraw from areas located west of borders, military property, guns, machine guns, rifles, ammunition, as well as tanks, armored vehicles, vehicles and fuel. It is necessary to overtake to the east of the border the entire rolling stock, why hastily load into the wagons of the military, I emphasize the military property and immediately send to our territory. "It was necessary to identify areas lines and routes for the withdrawal of troops and "to organize trouble-free communication with the withdrawn units, in order to always know exactly their situation"<sup>355</sup>. In

addition, new negotiations began between the military representatives of the parties. "On October 2 1939 at 15 hours 50 minutes, a conversation was held by the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR Marshal of the Soviet Union comrade Voroshilov and Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army Commander of the 1st rank comrade. Shaposhnikov with representatives of the German military

command in the person of General Kestring, Colonel Ashenbrenner and Lieutenant Colonel Krebs, who have come to the following agreement:

1. Parts of the Red Army that stopped on the line reached by 18 hours 29 September 1939, starting from the morning of October 5, 1939, they are assigned to the line of the river. Igorka, Rzadov, b. Volkushanka, village Charny Brud, Shchebra 1, Topiluvka, further on the border of the Eastern Prussia to the river. Pissa, east bank of the river. Pissa to its mouth, eastern bank of the river. Narev to the villages of Ostrov (near Ostrolenka), Troshin, Stylengi, Sokolovo, Rostki, the eastern bank of the river. Bug to the village of Rostki to the mouth of the river. Solokiya, southern bank of the river. Solokia to Poddubce, further from Poddubtse on Lyubycha-Krolevska, Sandst, Zaluzha, Will Oleshchytska, Sinyava, further east bank of the river San to its origins, including the Uzhok pass. All the points listed in this article remain with the units of the Red Army.

2. Parts of the Red Army located to the west of the line indicated in the 1st paragraph of this protocol, starting from the morning of October 5, 1939, are withdrawn in such a way that so that, every day, making a transition of about 20 km., to complete your departure:

- a) to the state border northwest of Grodno by October 8 in the evening; b) release the city of Suwalki by the evening of October 5 and hand over to his representatives on October 6 local German command;
- c) to the state border north-east of the city of Ostrov by the evening of October 8; d) on the river. Bug to the west of the city of Drogichin by the evening of October 9; d) on the line of the river. Bug from Kristinopol to Terespol west of Brest by the evening of October 11. 3.

The movement of the troops of both armies must be organized so that there is between advanced units of the German Army and the tail of the columns of the Red Army, the distance in on average up to 25

km. Both sides organize their movement in such a way that parts of the German army go: a) to

the line of the river. Bug from Kristinopol to Terespol (west of Brest) - by October 12

In the evening;

- b) on the river. Bug west of Drogichin - by October 10 in the evening;
- c) to the state border to the north-east of the city of Ostrov - by October 9 in the evening; d) to the city of Suwalki - October 6 in the evening; e) to the state border northwest of Grodno - by October 9 in the evening.

4. All questions that may arise during the transfer by the Red Army and acceptance German army points, cities, etc., are allowed by representatives of both sides to place, for which, on each main highway of movement of both armies, the Command special delegates are assigned. The

command of the Red Army takes the necessary measures in the cities and places which are transferred to the units of the German army, to their safety, and a special attention to the fact that cities, towns and important military defensive and economic structures (bridges, airfields, barracks, warehouses, railway junctions, stations, telegraph, telephone, power stations, rolling stock, etc.), as in them, and on the way to them, would be saved from damage and destruction until their transfer representatives of parts of the German army.

5. When withdrawing the troops of the Red Army, the aviation of the Red Army can only fly up to lines of the rearguards of the columns of the Red Army units and at an altitude of not more than 500 meters, aviation German army when moving to the east of the columns of the German army can only fly up to the lines of the vanguards of the columns of the German army and at a height of no higher than 500 meters. By class both armies of the line indicated in the 1st of this protocol, the aviation of both armies does not flies over the indicated line "356 of · At 20.40 on October 2, the troops received a directive from the People's Commissar defense No. 083, setting out the Soviet-German protocol, duplicated corresponding orders of the Military Councils of the Fronts357.

At 23.30 on October 2, the commander of the Belorussian Front, Kovalev, sent to Moscow the following request: "The established border along the Bug River near the city of Brest-Litovsk is extremely

unprofitable for us for the following reasons: the city of Brest is divided into two parts by the border - the western bypass of the forts goes to the Germans; with the proximity of the border, it is impossible to fully use the richest barracks in the city of Brest; the railway junction and the city itself will be in the sphere of machine-gun fire; river crossings. The Bug will not be covered by the necessary territory. The wonderful airfield near Malashevichi will go to the Germans. The front commander asks to reconsider the border in the Brest-Litovsk region, "leaving part of the territory on the western bank of the river for the USSR<sup>358</sup>. The next day, an answer came from Moscow that" the border near Brest was established by agreement and it is impossible to change it. The Brest Fortress, the Soviet troops blocked the Bug and blew up the lintels of the fortress moat. As a result, the water went through the bypass canal in front of the Terespol fortification, and the Soviet representative gave this canal to the Germans for the bed of the river Bug, along which the border was drawn<sup>360</sup>.

The conclusion of the Soviet-German Treaty of Friendship and Border of September 28, 1939 and the new military-political situation in Eastern Europe led to new assessments of the situation by the personnel of the Red Army. The shock of the events of September 17 has already passed, and now completely different voices have begun to be heard among the military. While waiting for information about the negotiations in Moscow, the fighters expressed the following thoughts: "it's a pity if you have to return - you want to go forward", "what will happen to the population if we leave these areas", "do we really have to retreat to the Bug again. The workers will again be under oppression landlords and capitalists, and they will be fascist reprisals", "Warsaw used to belong to Russia and we must take it." The overwhelming majority of the local population perceived the Red Army as their liberator and hoped to be included in the USSR. Upon learning that the Soviet troops would soon be withdrawn to the east, the local residents of the western bank of the Bug expressed "exceptional regret at the abandonment of the occupied settlements by the Red Army", asked: "Dear comrades, you will not leave us forever, we will do everything to ensure that you were soon with us back." Since September 30, local residents have been asking questions about the possibility of evacuating to the Soviet Union. In total, almost 42 thousand people were evacuated in the zones of the 5th and 6th armies alone, however, among the Polish population, 28 people expressed a desire to leave for the western bank of the Bug<sup>361</sup>.

Until October 5, Soviet troops were engaged in the evacuation of trophies from the territory located to the west of the established line. Unfortunately, the total dimensions of these trophies are unknown. So, only the troops of the 5th Army were taken out of the river. Western Bug 64 locomotives, 70 passenger, 1,130 covered wagons, 534 platforms, 609 coal, 104 tanks and various cargoes (artifacts, sugar, oats, grain, flour, alcohol, railway materials, stud farm, ore, iron, coal, coke, livestock, etc.) with a total volume of 2,174 wagons<sup>362</sup> Over 900 guns, over 10 thousand machine guns, over 300 thousand rifles, over 150 million rounds of ammunition, about 1 million shells and up to 300 from the Krasnobrod area became war trophies of the Red Army, Polish river Jozefow, Tomaszow 2 German aircraft and 363 were evacuated. In addition, the 113 auxiliary vessels 363, 154, 700 and tankettes on the river<sup>364</sup> Pripyat, 51 warships and over Polish military personnel were taken prisoner (this number included not only soldiers and officers of the Polish Army, but also policemen, gendarmes and all persons captured with weapons in their hands), of which the troops of the Belorussian Front took 60,202 prisoners, and the Ukrainian - 394 498 people<sup>366</sup>

From October 5 to October 12, Soviet troops were withdrawn beyond the new border line. Parts of the 16th Rifle Corps were withdrawn from the Suwalki ledge to the demarcation line by 4 p.m. on October 9. "The withdrawal of the corps went exactly according to plan", "there were no incidents or conflicts with the Germans during the withdrawal of our troops, except for the premature arrival of the Germans in Suwalki and disputes over individual settlements on the border (Zhyliny, Czarny Brud, Jablonska, Ivanuvka), which were eliminated in private negotiations on the spot and official negotiations in Suwayki on 9.10.39". The Suwalki were handed over to the Wehrmacht on 6 October. The troops of the 10th Army moved east at 10 pm on October 5 and by the evening of October 6 they were evacuated beyond the river. Western Bug, leaving Kosuv and

Gurna. The withdrawal of the 4th Army continued longer: Siedlce and Lukow were transferred to the Germans on October 6, Byala Podlaska on October 10, and the Soviet troops completely left the Bug at 4 pm on October 12. In the zone of the 5th army, units of the 4th infantry division of the Wehrmacht moved to Vlodava, and on October 9, troops of the 27th infantry division entered Chelm. Moreover, while there were neither Soviet nor German troops in the city, on October 7, local Polish activists "carried out pogroms and robberies, there were killed from the workers' militia and revolutionary-

mind workers." By the evening of October 13, German troops reached the demarcation line along its entire length<sup>367</sup>. Most of the Polish soldiers who found themselves in Soviet captivity were immediately dismissed to their homes. 125,803 people ended up in the NKVD camps, which led to a significant overcrowding of the camps<sup>369</sup>. On the basis of the decision of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR of October 3, it was decided to disband the remaining soldier. By October 19, 40,769 people had been sent to their place of residence. In 1939-1941. 43,054 people were transferred to Germany, and the Germans transferred 13,575 people to the USSR<sup>372</sup>. When it turned out that the vast majority of captured Polish officers could not be used in the interests of the USSR, 15,131 people (mostly officers and policemen) were shot in the spring of 1940.<sup>373</sup> and so on. crimes, which, as a rule, were suppressed by the command. Thus, from September 15 to October 1, the Military Tribunal of the Ukrainian Front convicted 49 military personnel for counter-revolutionary statements, robbery, robbery, desertion, failure to comply with orders, looting, negligence, resistance to the commander and violation of the rules of guard duty<sup>374</sup>.

Summing up the results of the Polish campaign, Molotov stated at the session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on October 31, 1939 that "the ruling circles of Poland were not a little proud of the" strength "of their state and the" power "of their army. , and then - the Red Army, so that nothing remains of this ugly offspring of the Treaty of Versailles "<sup>375</sup> . As early as October 1, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks adopted a program for the Sovietization of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus, which began to be strictly implemented<sup>376</sup>. The elections "showed that the overwhelming majority of the population of these regions agreed with the establishment of Soviet power and joining the Soviet Union"<sup>377</sup>. Elected on October 22, the People's Assemblies of Western Belarus and Western Ukraine proclaimed Soviet power on October 27-29 and asked to be included in the USSR. On November 1-2, 1939, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR granted their request<sup>378</sup>. The territory occupied by Soviet troops "was liberated from the landowners and capitalists", and its peoples "got the opportunity to reunite with the fraternal peoples of the GREAT COUNTRY OF SOVIETS and strengthen the great cause of LENIN-STALIN, the cause of building communism" as a united

friendly family. These events ended the solution of the Polish question in 1939. The outbreak of war in Europe in September 1939 justified the Kremlin's worst fears. It turned out that England and France were not ready for a real clash with Germany, and instead of a quick defeat of Germany, with the actual non-intervention of the Western allies, Poland was defeated. The policy of "appeasement" brought its inevitable results, demonstrating the inability of London and Paris to defend their own interests. One can explain the position of England and France in different ways, but there is no getting away from the fact that the Allies left Poland to its fate. Moreover, as is now known, this position of London and Paris was not some kind of improvisation that arose under the influence of events. No, this was the strategic line of the Anglo-French allies that had been formulated in advance and was being steadily implemented, deter



who believe that an alliance with England and France was in the interests of the USSR, which in this case would have to go to war with Germany on the territory of Poland with the complete inactivity of the allies in the

west<sup>380</sup>. Having achieved its interests in Eastern Europe thanks to the non-aggression pact, the Soviet Union closely followed the developments in Europe, preparing to use them to its advantage. The passive position of England and France, which had the opportunity to defeat Germany already in September 1939, allowed the Soviet leadership to intensify its policy towards Poland, which during most of the interwar period was considered by Moscow as enemy No. 1, and begin to revise the borders imposed on it in 1920-1921 as a result of Polish aggression. The German leadership sought to involve the USSR in the war with Poland in order to demonstrate the German-Soviet "alliance", but Moscow successfully avoided this danger. The Soviet propaganda, explaining the reasons for intervention in the German-Polish war, was based on the ideas of ensuring the state interests of the USSR and protecting the Ukrainian and Belarusian peoples in the conditions of the collapse of Poland. The Soviet leadership managed to combine this essentially anti-German propaganda and cooperation with Germany in the partition of Poland.

As a result, it was possible to achieve that London and Paris considered the actions of the USSR as a lesser evil compared to the German occupation of the entire Polish territory. This forced confession was made on October 1, 1939 in a radio speech by W. Churchill, who stated, in particular, that "to protect Russia from the Nazi threat, it was clearly necessary that the Russian armies stand on this line. In any case, this line exists, and, consequently, an Eastern Front has been created, which Nazi Germany will not dare to take in. Such an

allusion to the cowardice of Berlin opened a new chapter of the English misfortune"<sup>381</sup> of the policy of provoking a German-

Soviet war. The answer to the question of whether the USSR entered World War II depends on what events we consider to be World War II? If the Second World War means a war between England, France, Poland, on the one hand, and Germany, on the other, then the Soviet Union did not enter this war, confirming its neutrality with respect to London, Paris and Berlin. Moreover, it should be remembered that Germany, England, France and Poland, for one reason or another, actually recognized the status of a "non-participating in the war" state for the Soviet Union<sup>382</sup>. Therefore, the actions of the Red Army in Poland can be considered, in accordance with modern terminology, as a peacekeeping operation. But if we consider the Second World War as a process of changing the systems of international relations, which includes a set of wars of great powers between themselves and other countries for expanding their influence and revising the borders established in 1919-1922, then in this case the Soviet Union, of course, entered the Second World War, but not on the side of Germany, as some researchers believe, but as a third force acting in its own interests. This was especially evident during the Soviet-German negotiations

on September 27-28, 1939. The Soviet leadership managed to fully ensure its interests in the Baltic states and, taking into account the mood in the West, get rid of the fate of the overwhelming majority of the Polish people transferred to the sphere of German interests. The repressive German policy towards the Poles in the occupied territories stimulated the anti-German movement, which was a potential ally of the USSR in the event of a war with Germany. As J. Gross, who studied the situation in Poland after September 1939, notes, "during the Soviet occupation, there was no feeling of pervasive discriminatory contempt for superhumans, which the Germans so energetically radiated. [...] It was easier to cooperate with Soviet power, under Nazi rule it was easier to stand up on the path of underground struggle. It is difficult to disagree with the opinion of W. Shearer, who believes that "Hitler unleashed a war against Poland and won it, but Stalin turned out to be much more profitable, whose troops hardly fired even a single shot. The Soviet Union

received almost half of Poland and took up the Baltic states. This, as never before, alienated Germany from her main long-term goals: from Ukrainian wheat and Romanian oil, which she urgently needed to survive under the British blockade. Even the Polish oil-bearing regions of Boryslav and Drohobych, which were claimed by Hitler, Stalin bargained with him, generously promising to sell the Germans the equivalent of the annual oil production in these regions.

### **The Soviet Union and the struggle for the Scandinavian bridgehead**

With the outbreak of World War II, the Scandinavian Peninsula acquired great strategic importance, determined by its geopolitical position at the junction of three military-political camps into which Europe was split. England is located 450 km west of Scandinavia, Germany is located to the south, and the USSR adjoins from the east: all of them could use it as an unsinkable aircraft carrier in the North of Europe and a base for naval operations, which was important for achieving advantages in the struggle for dominance in Europe. Having mastered Scandinavia, the Anglo-French allies could pose a serious threat to the German fleet and important military and economic centers of northern Germany, as well as threaten the northwestern regions of the USSR and control the exit of the Soviet Navy from the Barents and Baltic Seas to the Atlantic Ocean. For its part, Germany would be able to provide its industry with supplies of Swedish iron ore, create an advantageous base for a naval blockade of its Western opponents, use Scandinavia as a springboard to attack the northwestern regions of the USSR and control the sea trade routes between England and the USSR. The Soviet Union could use Scandinavia as a base for pressure on Germany from the north and for operations at sea against England and France.

Although the armed forces of the Scandinavian countries were small (see Table 9) and were not considered by the opposing sides as a serious enemy, the geographical and climatic conditions of the Scandinavian Peninsula created significant difficulties for the actions of the troops and required significant training. In military and economic terms, the export of timber and pulp from Norway, Sweden and Finland, as well as the merchant fleet of Norway, Sweden and Denmark, which accounted for 11.1% of the world merchant fleet, was of particular importance for England and Germany. At the same time, unlike Germany, which was to a certain extent tied to the supply of Swedish iron ore, the economic value of Scandinavia was less significant for England, France and the USSR. Therefore, the decisive factor for the opposing sides was the important strategic position of the peninsula, which promised each of them great advantages in waging war. However, the specifics of the Scandinavian theater of operations (TVD) made it an area of peripheral struggle, which to a certain extent affected the actions of the parties<sup>385</sup>. The position of the Scandinavian countries in the interwar period was

determined by their entry into the sterling bloc, close economic ties with England, Germany and the United States and traditional neutrality. In the 1920s Scandinavian countries were more concerned about internal problems and mutual disputes, and only in the first half of the 1930s. gradually the trend of regional cooperation began to prevail. Socio-political sympathies of the Scandinavian countries, in which in power from 1929-1935. there were social democratic governments, they were on the side of England, and fascism was seen as a lesser evil compared to communism. As the European crisis grew, the Scandinavian countries became more and more isolated in a policy of neutrality, to which Finland joined in December 1935, rejecting all proposals for participation in collective actions. This position aroused the discontent of the USSR, the approval of Germany, and was used by England to justify its policy of appeasing Berlin. In April - July 1938, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland openly declared their non-participation in the League's sanctions

Nations. Despite the proclaimed policy of neutrality, "Finland feared Russia, Denmark feared Germany; Sweden could not decide whom it should fear more; and Norway considered its position strong enough to fear anyone at all"<sup>387</sup>

Of course, in Moscow, the main attention was paid to relations with Finland, which developed very difficultly and were largely determined by recent history. The civil war on the territory of the former Russian Empire, which separated Moscow and Helsinki on opposite sides of the political barricades, and the struggle for Karelia, which dragged on until February 1922, despite the conclusion of the Tartu Peace Treaty on October 14, 1920, led to the fact that Finland became the northern link of the anti-Soviet "cordon sanitaire". At the same time, since the summer of 1922, the general normalization of Soviet-Finnish relations began, and in the future they "resembled a cold peace", although on the whole they were quite correct<sup>388</sup>. As the international situation changed, Finland went on January 21, 1932 to sign a non-aggression pact with the USSR, extended on April 7, 1934 until 1945. Nevertheless, Soviet-Finnish relations were characterized by mutual suspicion, both sides created serious defensive lines along the border, especially powerful on the Karelian Isthmus. Finland constantly demonstrated unwillingness to cooperate with the USSR even within the framework of the League of Nations, considering its eastern neighbor as a potential enemy No. a possible springboard for an anti-Soviet war. Sympathy for Germany, as a real counterbalance to the USSR, made Finnish neutrality rather suspicious both for Moscow and for the Scandinavian countries<sup>389</sup>. In 1938 - early 1939, Moscow repeatedly offered Finland to expand the non-aggression pact or in some other way guarantee the impossibility of using its territory as a springboard for actions against the USSR, but the Finnish leadership constantly refused, at the same time trying to get the consent of the USSR to remilitarization Åland Islands, whose demilitarized status was regulated by the Åland Convention of 1921.<sup>390</sup> When, in January 1939, Sweden and Finland turned to the countries participating in the convention and the USSR with a proposal to revise it and sanction the

Swedish-Finnish plans for the remilitarization of the islands, the USSR requested specific data on the planned measures, and Helsinki's refusal to provide this information became a convenient pretext for a statement in May 1939 about Moscow's negative position on this issue, which led to the League of Nations refusing to consider it. In the summer of 1939, with the approval of Sweden, Finland rejected the USSR proposal for a joint Soviet-Swedish-Finnish defense of the Åland Islands. In the spring and summer of 1939, Norway, Sweden and Finland refused both the Anglo-French guarantees and the German proposal to conclude non-aggression pacts. With the approval of the Scandinavian countries, the Finnish leadership also reacted negatively to the possibility of receiving Anglo-French-Soviet guarantees, believing that they would lead to giving Moscow a free hand in relation to Finland, and blackmailed England with the fact that if guarantees were provided, it would take the side of Germany. On August 7-12, 1939, the largest military maneuvers in the history of the country on the Karelian Isthmus were held in Finland, at which the operation to repel the attack on the "Mannerheim Line" was practiced and to which all military attachés were invited, except for the Soviet<sup>391</sup>

Refusal of any cooperation with Moscow, demonstration of a loyal attitude towards Germany and clearly anti-Soviet military preparations created a strong impression among the Soviet leadership that in the event of the participation of the USSR in the war in Europe, Finland "will certainly be in the camp of our opponents"<sup>392</sup>. By the middle of 1939, the Soviet leadership was convinced of the impossibility of drawing Finland into the "orbit of the Soviet Union" through diplomacy, and Moscow began to think about a military solution to the Finnish problem. Thanks to the Soviet-German agreement on August 23, 1939, Moscow received a free hand in relation to

Finland, which continued to be confident that Germany would support it in the event of a conflict with the USSR. True, the agreement of August 23 caused in Finland resentment against Germany, which "sold" it, but both Berlin and Moscow assured Helsinki that no agreements affecting Finland had been reached. Although Berlin recognized the sphere of interests of the USSR in Eastern Europe, Moscow should have created more serious guarantees for ensuring its interests in the region<sup>393</sup>. Since the beginning of the war in Europe, the Scandinavian countries have declared neutrality, hoping to avoid being drawn into the

war. England and France, which established an economic blockade of Germany, were interested in attracting the maximum number of countries to this blockade. However, the small countries of Europe, including the Scandinavian ones, were in no hurry to get closer to the warring parties. Attempts at diplomatic influence did not give quick results, and the naval commands of the warring countries began to think about preparing operations in northern Europe. The Anglo-French allies were interested in cutting off the supply of Swedish iron ore to Germany, and already in September 1939 the British Admiralty proposed blocking Narvik and putting pressure on Sweden to reduce the supply of ore to Germany. However, the political leadership was in no hurry to agree to such drastic actions, intending to continue the diplomatic dialogue with the Scandinavian countries. For its part, the command of the German Navy on October 3 began to study the possibility of occupying strongholds in Norway and Northern Denmark. Moreover, until about December 1939, these developments were mainly due to the need to acquire bases for fleet operations in a naval war against England. Later, the problem of ensuring the supply of Swedish ore became urgent.

In addition to studying the military aspect of penetration into the Scandinavian countries, the belligerents also waged a political struggle in the region, which boiled down primarily to using or limiting the neutrality of these countries, which largely contributed to Germany overcoming the Anglo-French economic blockade. Therefore, England and France demanded the restriction of the rights of neutrals, and Germany took the position of defender of their interests. The Soviet Union also took part in this struggle, which on October 25 and December 10, 1939, protested against the methods of naval blockade by England and France. The Scandinavian countries left the sterling bloc with the outbreak of the war and sought to pursue a policy of economic support for each other and maintain good relations with all the warring powers that offered them

trade negotiations for the period of the war. On November 11, 1939, an Anglo-Norwegian agreement was concluded on the charter by England of the greater and better part of the Norwegian merchant tonnage until the end of the war, but the trade negotiations dragged on due to England's excessive claims. Sweden turned out to be in a better position, which on December 7 signed a trade agreement with England, in particular, providing for the freight of 50% of the Swedish merchant tonnage until the end of the war, and on December 22 with Germany, providing it with guaranteed supplies of iron ore<sup>395</sup>. In the autumn of 1939, the Scandinavian countries began to show

interest in expanding economic ties with the USSR,<sup>396</sup> but political changes in Eastern Europe gave their press food for anti-Soviet statements. In addition, Finland was concerned about the mobilization that began on September 7 in the USSR and the putting on alert of the troops of the Leningrad Military District (LVO), the Red Banner Baltic and Northern Fleets. On September 11, Finland expressed its readiness to negotiate a trade agreement with the USSR, to settle the issue of the Åland Islands and tried to clarify the reasons for the partial conscription into the Red Army<sup>397</sup>. Having received an answer that it was caused by the current international situation, the Finnish leadership decided to start conscripting reservists into the army and conduct maneuvers with their participation on the Karelian Isthmus. All this created a tense atmosphere, especially since the Finnish press showed loyalty to Germany. Having entered the territory of Poland, the USSR on September 17 declared its neutrality with respect to Finland, and on September 19 expressed its readiness

to resume economic negotiations with Helsinki<sup>398</sup> Against the backdrop of negotiations between the USSR and the Baltic countries, Britain already on September 27 advised Finland to resist "pressure from the East." At the same time, Finland declared to Germany that it October 1939, the main attention of      would not agree to the agreement. Gradually, from the agreement with the USSR as Estonia<sup>399</sup> participants in the political struggle in the region was drawn

to the Soviet-Finnish negotiations. The annexation of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus, the conclusion of agreements with the Baltic countries significantly improved the Soviet position in Eastern Europe and, apparently, gave rise to the hope of the Soviet leadership for an equally favorable solution to the Finnish question. In relation to Finland, they initially intended to act according to the Baltic model, offering her an agreement on mutual assistance. At the same time, it was not excluded that Finland would again take an unconstructive position, and on October 5 the Red Banner Baltic Fleet (KBF) received an order to develop a plan to capture the islands in the Gulf of Finland (including Bjerke Island)<sup>400</sup>. Like other states bordering the USSR, Finland was considered a potential adversary in Moscow, and the Soviet military leadership periodically prepared plans in case of war in the Northwest. Unfortunately, this issue has not been practically studied, and in historiography the point of view prevails that the Soviet side began to prepare for war with Finland only in 1939. However, available documents show that the reality was somewhat different. Only in the 1930s. the Soviet General Staff developed several options for military operations in the northwest of the USSR. True, at first, Soviet military plans for Finland were mainly defensive in nature, and only in the 1936 plan did the troops receive active offensive missions, which were then constantly refined. Accordingly, the number of troops involved in the operation also increased. So, if the plans for 1932-1935. it was planned to have from 4 to 6 rifle divisions and 1 rifle brigade, then in the 1936 plan it was about using 7 rifle divisions and 2 tank brigades, and in the 1937 plan - about 10 rifle and 1 mountain rifle divisions, 2 tank brigades and On April 19, 1939, at the headquarters of the LVO, in the 3 artillery

regiments of the RGK<sup>401</sup>, a note was prepared at the headquarters of the LVO according to the plan of military operations of the North-Western Front, deployed on mobilization on the basis of the LVO, against Finland and Estonia in the conditions of the war of the USSR with Germany and its allied Poland. Against Finland, it was supposed to deploy the 14th Army (6 divisions and 3 tank brigades) on the Karelian Isthmus and the 17th Army (5 divisions) from the Barents Sea to Lake Ladoga. It was envisaged to capture Petsamo, an attack on Kayani and Nurmes, and the main forces of the 17th Army were to advance on Sortavala and then go to the rear of the Finnish troops on the Karelian Isthmus. From the 4th day of mobilization, the 14th Army went on the offensive on the Karelian Isthmus and was supposed to go to the front of Taipalejoki - Rautu - Kivennapa - Kaunis, and with the end of the concentration of the main forces on the 10th day of mobilization, attack Vyborg in order to defeat the enemy, seizing its fortified area and, in cooperation with the troops of the 17th Army, the Kexholm-Sortavala-Vyborg area<sup>402</sup>. Thus, the troops of the LVO constantly worked out options for combat operations in the event of war. In January - March 1939, the highest command staff of the district troops studied the issues of the initial period of the war, oncoming battles, defense, followed by the transition to the offensive and attack on the defending enemy. As a rule, the potential adversary (Finland) undertook hostile actions under pressure from other Western states<sup>403</sup>.

In March 1939, the new commander of the LVO troops, commander of the 2nd rank, K.A. Meretskov received an order from the people's commissar of defense to check the readiness of the troops "in the event of a military conflict" with Finland<sup>404</sup>. In pursuance of the directive of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 500165, the Military Council of the Leningrad Military District held on April 19-25, 1939 a bilateral military game on cards with the participation of the command staff of the troops of the Ural Military District and the Red Banner Baltic Fleet. According to the operational plan of the game, the "Western" under pressure and with the support of the fascis

states began to mobilize and concentrate their troops to the borders of the "eastern". In some areas, the fascist detachments of the "Western" tried to violate the state border of the "Eastern" in order to draw them into the war, exhaust their forces on the defensive lines, and then, with the approach of the expeditionary forces, inflict a decisive defeat on them and capture Leningrad. The "Eastern", drawn into the war and knowing that the "Western" without the support of the "Blacks" are not able to resist for a long time, set as their goal the defeat of the army of the "Western" before the expeditionary troops approached to help them. In the future, acting along the coast of the Gulf of Finland in cooperation with the Red Banner Baltic Fleet, the "Eastern" were to occupy the most important ports on the coast of the Gulf of Bothnia and the Gulf of Finland and thereby prevent any possibility of transferring expeditionary troops to the territory of the "Western".

In order to fulfill the assigned tasks, the "Eastern", having deployed one army each on the Karelian Isthmus and east of Lake Ladoga, went on the offensive, hoping that, having bypassed Lake Ladoga from the north and reached the rear of the defensive fortifications on the Karelian Isthmus, one of the armies would support the other in overcoming them. The game took place in summer conditions and showed that the attackers were too carried away and overestimated the rate of advance of the troops, not taking into account the complexities of the theater of operations and the resistance of the enemy troops. Speaking at the analysis of the game, Meretskov noted the novelty of the situation that was being played out, since the option was previously studied when the enemy "mobilized and concentrated before us, invaded our territory, and then only we gathered our forces, went on the offensive and beat the enemy." Noting the harmfulness of this "theory", the commander said that "at the moment when our opponents mobilize their armies, bring their troops to our borders, then we will not sit and wait! Our operational training, training of troops should be directed in such a way in order to ensure in practice the complete defeat of the enemy already at a time when he has not yet had time to muster all his forces. As an example, the past game was cited, during which, having received information about the mobilization and concentration of enemy troops to the border, "the Reds immediately invaded the enemy's territory with the task of first destroying his cover units, and then defeating the main forces" 405

On June 25-29, 1939, the Military Council of the LVO conducted an operational trip to the Karelian Isthmus, during which the operation was lost, when the "northern", encouraged by the "browns", provoked a border conflict, and the "southern" on June 25 began military actions for actions, having superiority in the operations. Thus, the preparation of combat air 406. border with Finland was carried out in accordance with the plans for combat training of the Red Army, and the main ideas of the Soviet military plan were formed and tested in exercises over the course of, apparently, several years. In historiography, there was an opinion that in June - July 1939, the Main Military Council (GVS) discussed the operational plan for the war with Finland, during which discrepancies in assessments were discovered between the General Staff and the headquarters of the LVO. Unfortunately, no documents reflecting this situation have been published, and it remains unclear whether these events took place, and if so, when exactly. In any case, the contradictions in the memoirs of K.A. Meretskov and A.M. Vasilevsky does not allow unequivocally to resolve the issue of the time of the GVS meeting.

Be that as it may, the idea of interaction between troops operating on the Karelian Isthmus and north of Lake Ladoga was the basis for planning at the headquarters of the 8th Army 408. The plan of operation developed by the command of the 56th Rifle Corps on September 23 also provided for the capture of Sortavala and an offensive in the rear of enemy troops operating on the Karelian Isthmus. It was believed that it would take 5 days to reach Sortavala, 6-7 days to Nurmes, and 10-11 days to Kayan. True, the document contains a reservation that "this calculation was taken on the basis of favorable conditions of the situation and the absence of any serious resistance from the enemy" 409. The same ideas were laid down in the "Plan of Operation against Finland" dated October 29, 1939, for the implementa

it was supposed to have 2 rifle divisions in the Murmansk Army Group, a separate rifle corps (3 divisions) in the Kemsy and Rebofsky directions, 7 rifle divisions in the 8th Army, and 8 rifle divisions and 3 tank brigades. The troops were to have 1550 guns, 989 tanks and 1581 . Apparently, this plan was considered in Moscow to be overly optimistic, and as a result, the number of LVO troops involved in the operation was somewhat increased.

In mid-September 1939, the concentration of troops of the LVO began according to cover plans. According to the directive of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 16659 of September 11, it was ordered to transfer to Murmansk the headquarters of the 33rd Rifle Corps, the 14th Rifle Division and the artillery regiment of the RGK, on the basis of which, by order of the NPO No. 0052 of September 16, 1939, the Murmansk Army Group was formed, which received the task of deploying troops on the border by October 1411. On September 14, the LVO received directive No. 16669, according to which they deployed on the border with Finland: in the Ukhta direction, the 54th mountain rifle division, in Karelia - the 168th, 18th rifle divisions and the 314th high-power artillery division (BM), on the Karelian Isthmus - the 19th and 50th rifle corps (16th, 24th, 43rd, 70th, 90th rifle divisions), 1st, 20th, 35th tank brigades , 6 artillery regiments and 3 artillery divisions BM412

On October 5, the USSR invited Finland to talks on improving Soviet-Finnish relations, taking into account the current situation in Europe, expressing the hope of receiving an answer from Helsinki "no later than tonight or tomorrow morning"<sup>413</sup>. Having received an invitation, the Finnish leadership immediately turned to Germany, England, France, the USA and Sweden for support. Germany, bound by an agreement with the USSR, gave general advice not to aggravate relations with Moscow, while England, France and the United States advised the Finnish leadership to take an uncompromising position, hoping that the complication of Soviet-Finnish relations would provoke contradictions between Moscow and Berlin. Stockholm, unwilling to interfere, took an evasive position. In an effort to enlist the support of the great powers and complete the concentration of troops on the Karelian Isthmus, Finland was in no hurry to respond. This caused discontent in Moscow, and on October 7 Molotov asked the Finnish ambassador A.S. Irie-Koskinen "why has the Finnish government not responded so far" to the proposal for negotiations. The Soviet side linked economic and political problems, declaring that "we must hurry with the question of improving relations between countries"<sup>414</sup>. The corresponding task was also received by the Soviet plenipotentiary in Helsinki V.K. Derevyansky, who raised this issue with the Finnish Minister of Foreign Affairs E. Erkko on October 8, but the Finnish side stated that "if the Soviet Union tries to exert pressure, it will receive a strong rebuff", and the Finnish delegation will arrive in Moscow only after agreeing on the position of the government and parliament<sup>415</sup> . In Finland, on October 6, it was decided to reinforce the troops with reservists, and

on October 5 and 9 they received orders to prepare for defense and operations in the Rebola area on Soviet territory. On October 8, Finland announced that it would not agree to conclude an agreement similar to the Baltic countries. As a result, the Finnish delegation received extremely limited instructions and could only discuss the issue of three islands in the Gulf of Finland, which practically ruled out a compromise in future negotiations. The Finnish press launched an anti-Soviet campaign, which was facilitated by the violation of Finnish airspace. On October 9, on October 8, the Military Council of the LVO issued combat order No. 142nd rifle divisions, 20th tank brigade) - divisions, 35th tank brigade) and 19th (24th, 43rd, 70th rifle rifle corps, the 40th tank brigade and artillery division were also transferred there BM417 On October 12, a general mobilization and evacuation of the civilian population from large cities was announced in Finland. On October 13, Soviet aircraft again invaded Finnish airspace. Both sides conducted reconnaissance over the Gulf of Finland and accused each other of violating

airspace. Soviet diplomats reported to Moscow on ongoing Finns consultations with England, which recommended not to "make any concessions, up to armed struggle, regardless of any victims, "and about the outbreak of military preparations in Finland<sup>418</sup>.

On October 11-12, Norway, Denmark, Sweden and the USA turned to the USSR with a request not to present demands to Finland that would affect her independence and neutrality. In response, the Soviet side declared its friendly position with regard to Finland and about the unwillingness to affect its independence, since the negotiations "have aim of improving friendly relations between Finland and the USSR.

Molotov noted that "these issues will be settled, since Finland will pursue a policy of friendship and good-neighborly relations towards the USSR"<sup>419</sup> Of course, Western demarches were regarded in Helsinki as support for the correctness uncompromising position of the Finns. For our part, through diplomatic channels, Moscow showed a willingness to compromise, but warned that if Finland "will persist in its intransigence and respond to our peace-loving saber-rattling proposals and almost mobilization of their armed forces, this can close the way to our peace agreement with the Finnish government and create undesirable complications in the relations of this country with the Soviet Soyuz"<sup>420</sup> On .

October 12, Soviet-Finnish negotiations began in Moscow. When the Finnish delegation refused to discuss the issue of concluding an agreement on mutual assistance, the Soviet the party proposed a draft treaty on the joint defense of the Gulf of Finland on the type the planned Finnish-Swedish agreement on the defense of the Åland Islands. But this too the proposal was rejected by the Finns without discussion. Then the Soviet delegation suggested the following:

1. Finland leases the port of Hanko to the USSR for 30 years "for the construction of a naval base with coastal artillery defense, which, together with coastal artillery, is capable of coast of the Gulf of Finland near the Baltic port to block the passage to The Gulf of Finland. To protect the naval base, allow the Soviet government to keep area of the port of Hanko one infantry regiment, two anti-aircraft artillery battalions, two regiments aviation, a battalion of tanks - no more than five thousand people in total"; 2.

The Soviet fleet is granted "the right to anchor in Lappvik Bay"; 3. Finland transfers the islands of Gogland (Suursari), Seiskari, Lavensaari, Tyutersaari (small and large), Bjerke, as well as part of the Karelian Isthmus from the village Lippola to the southern tip of the city of Koivisto, as well as the western part of the peninsulas "Rybachy" and "Medium" (total 2761 sq. km);

4. For its part, the USSR transfers to Finland the territory in the area of Rebola and Lake Poros (5529 sq. km); 5. The existing

Soviet-Finnish non-aggression pact is supplemented by an article "on mutual obligations not to join groupings and coalitions of states, directly or indirectly hostile to this or that contracting party";

6. The parties disarm their fortifications on the Karelian Isthmus; 7. The USSR promises "not to object to arming the Åland Islands" Finland's own forces<sup>421</sup>. Not having the

authority to discuss these proposals, the Finnish delegation on October 14 went to Helsinki for a consultation, which was apparently a surprise for the Soviet parties who hoped to reach an agreement quickly. It took four days the Finnish leadership in order to coordinate their position in the negotiations with the USSR, since in the government turned out to be supporters of certain concessions to the eastern neighbor. For overcoming such sentiments on October 18-19, the President and Minister of Foreign Affairs Finland during the meeting of the leaders of the Scandinavian countries in Stockholm tried to achieve the support of their neighbors in the event of an aggravation of relations with the USSR. However



the Scandinavian countries shied away from making any specific promises, which did not stop Erkkö from deceiving his cabinet colleagues by informing them of Sweden's readiness to provide diplomatic support to Finland. The Finnish leadership was dominated by the opinion formulated by Erkkö that "the Soviet Union is bluffing" and that a "hard line" should be pursued towards it. a number of newspapers and magazines. On October 17, Marshal K.G. Mannerheim was appointed ·

commander in chief, and the next day his headquarters was created. V. Tanner was included in the composition of the Finnish delegation at the talks, who was supposed to control the head of the delegation Y. Paasikivi, who was inclined to compromise. It is clear that all these clearly hostile actions of Finland, which were generally known in Moscow, caused an equally negative reaction from the Soviet side. On October 19, the Soviet Air Force conducted a large-scale aerial reconnaissance of the Karelian Isthmus and Finnish Karelia<sup>423</sup>. Thus, both sides resorted to a certain military-political pressure during the negotiations. On October 23, negotiations in Moscow resumed. Finland expressed its readiness to transfer to the USSR the islands of Seiskari, Penisaari, Lavansaari, Tyutersaari (small and large) located in the Gulf of Finland and to discuss the issue of transferring the island of Suursari. Regarding the border on the Karelian Isthmus, the Finnish leadership agreed to move the border 10 km west along the coast of the Gulf of Finland, but rejected the Soviet offer to lease Hanko and the right to anchor in Lappvik

Bay, since the troops stationed there could be used "for an attack against Finland ". Helsinki agreed to clarify the relevant article of the Soviet-Finnish non-aggression pact. All other Soviet proposals were rejected, although the agreement of the USSR to the remilitarization of the Åland Islands was noted with satisfaction. The Soviet side noted that the proposals submitted were minimal, and stated that it could not refuse the proposal to establish a Soviet naval base in Hanko, although it limited the number of its troops to 4 thousand people and the lease term to the time of the European war. The Soviet delegation expressed readiness to slightly move the line of the future border to the east 10-20 km south of the city of Koivisto, but insisted on transferring the island of Bjerke to the USSR. The Finnish proposal was accepted for a corresponding strengthening of the existing non-aggression pact. All other proposals of the USSR remained in force<sup>425</sup> Not having the authority to discuss these proposals, the Finnish delegation returned to Helsinki on October 24 for new consultations. Such an unsuccessful course of negotiations convinced the Soviet leadership that Finland was trying to drag out time and abandon any agreement. Therefore, it was necessary to prepare for more decisive action. Moscow knew about the moral support of Finland from England, France and the USA, but they were sure that neither London, nor Paris, nor Washington would go further than this. On November 24, England hinted to the USSR that it would not intervene in the event of a conflict, while Finland was told that it should take a firm stand and not succumb to Soviet pressure. Thus, it was about provoking war in order to use Finland "in order to cause as much harm to Russia as possible, regardless of the fact that in the end the Finns will collapse in the face of her superior power" <sup>426</sup> . However, in Helsinki, Western appeals fell on fertile ground, and the Finnish leadership became even more optimistic about the possibility of a conflict with the USSR, which, as many believed, simply would not happen. The sober voices

of Paasikivi and Mannerheim, who advocated a compromise, were not heard. The tough stance of the government towards the leaders of parliamentary factions led to the fact that they generally supported his position. That is, the possibility of an agreement was put an end to.

In the meantime, Finland completed its mobilization and carried out maneuvers at the end of October. On October 25, Finnish territorial waters were declared dangerous for navigation due to mine laying in the area of the Åland Islands and near the borders of the USSR. Finnish troops were deployed in the border zone, the main forces occupied defensive lines on the Karelian Isthmus. The Soviet leadership reacted rather painfully to the rumors initiated by Helsinki that the Finnish delegation would no longer go to Moscow, and negotiations would be conducted through diplomatic channels. On October 28, Soviet diplomats in Helsinki were given the task of clarifying whether the delay in the return of the delegation meant a breakdown in

negotiations<sup>427</sup>. There was practically no hope left in Moscow for a peaceful solution of the issues with Finland. Molotov believed that "there is nothing left but to make them understand their mistake and force them to accept our proposals, which they stubbornly recklessly reject during peace negotiations ... Until the negotiations are interrupted. One of these days they are waiting for the return of the Finnish delegation to Moscow with the answer of the Finnish government to our new concessions to them. But we will not go any further"<sup>428</sup>. The Soviet leadership believed they could quickly force Helsinki to accept their proposals. According to the order of the General Staff No. 0145 dated October 24, the 49th, 75th and 123rd rifle divisions were transferred to the Karelian Isthmus, and the 138th, 155th and 163rd of Defense rifle divisions were sent to Karelia and on October 225, the People's Commissar allowed transfer to Petrozavodsk the administration of the artillery regiment<sup>429</sup>. 8th Army from the Estonian border<sup>430</sup>. On October 29, the Military Council of the Leningrad Military District presented the "Plan of Operation against Finland" to the People's Commissar of Defense, according to which Soviet troops were to invade Finland in five directions in order to "pull apart" the enemy force grouping and, in cooperation with aviation, inflict a decisive defeat on the Finnish army in 10-15 days. army<sup>431</sup>. However, the Soviet leadership, apparently, still hoped

that they could put pressure on Finland and achieve their goals without bringing things to war. First of all, Moscow tried to neutralize the anti-Soviet propaganda of the Finnish press. Speaking at a session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Molotov on October 31 dwelt in some detail on the course of the Soviet-Finnish negotiations. Noting the "influence on the part of third powers" on Helsinki and expressing the hope that "Finland will show due understanding" of the problem of ensuring the security of the USSR on the northwestern borders in the conditions of the European war, he denied rumors about the USSR encroachment on Finnish sovereignty, about its demands transfers of Vyborg and areas north of Lake Ladoga, the Åland Islands, or claims against Sweden and Norway. Having outlined the Soviet proposals in some detail, Molotov expressed the hope that "if there is goodwill, the Finnish government will meet our minimum proposals, which not only do not contradict the national and state interests of Finland, but strengthen its external security and create a broad basis for further wide development of political and economic relations between our countries" and that in Helsinki "they will not succumb to any anti-Soviet pressure and incitement on the part of anyone" and will not "look for a pretext to disrupt the proposed agreement", which, "of course, caused would cause serious damage to Finland"<sup>432</sup>.

Since the Finnish government did not fully inform even the parliament about the Soviet proposals, fearing that this would cause a split and weaken the unity of the nation, this speech was received with irritation in Helsinki. On November 1, Erkko declared that the proposals of the USSR were being dictated by "Russian imperialism"<sup>433</sup>. On November 2, Sweden conveyed to the Soviet side a request not to put forward such demands in negotiations with Finland that would impede the achievement of a mutually acceptable agreement. In response, Molotov rightly stated that such steps by Sweden only support intransigence. On November 3, the last round of negotiations began. Finnish delegation of Finland<sup>434</sup>. position on the islands of the Gulf of Finland and agreed to move the border on the Karelian Isthmus to Fort Inno, but categorically refused to provide

the lease of the Hanko Peninsula to the USSR and other Soviet proposals<sup>435</sup>. On November 4, Stalin again proved to the Finnish side the need to create a Soviet naval base on the northern coast at the entrance to the Gulf of Finland, offering to place it on nearby islands in the Hanko area or sell this territory to the USSR. As a result, the Finnish delegation decided to ask Helsinki for consent to the transfer of the island of Yussarö to the Soviet base, but the Finnish leadership had already bitten the bit. Instead of considering a compromise proposal, the delegation was asked to either reach an agreement on Finnish terms or return to Helsinki. On November 9, the last meeting of the delegations took place, during which it became clear that the parties remained unconvinced, and on November 13 the Finnish delegation left Moscow<sup>436</sup>. When

the Finnish delegation crossed the border, the Finnish border guards opened fire on the Soviet border guards. In Helsinki, the outcome of the talks in Moscow was seen as a significant victory for Erkko's uncompromising diplomacy. Therefore, the opinion prevailed that the Soviet leadership was bluffing and there would be no war, and the Finnish Army General Staff began to develop plans for the demobilization of called-up reservists. Military analysts did not allow the possibility of concentrating large forces of the Red Army, hoping that the Finnish army would be able to resist 15-17 Soviet divisions for 6 months, and during this time allies would be found or an acceptable compromise would be reached. Despite reports of Soviet deployments, on 25 November it was concluded that there would be no war. The Finnish military overestimated their own defensive capabilities and hoped for support from Norway and Sweden. Accordingly, the Red Army was completely underestimated. On October 28, the Finnish General Staff concluded that "the Red Army will not become an effective means of waging war," and therefore, "taking into account the internal political situation in the USSR, the Soviet government will not start a war, even if against the numerically weakest army"<sup>437</sup>. Moreover, in the event of a Soviet attack, it was envisaged to cross the border and occupy a number of territories in Karelia, which would create a base for the anti-Bolshevik movement in the USSR. The rupture

of the talks by the Finnish side provoked Moscow to a military solution to the problem. On November 3, the KBF received the task of preparing a plan for a war with Finland, which was approved on November 22. From November 5, 4 more divisions advanced to the Finnish border. On November 15, the LVO received the directive of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 0200 / op, according to which the Murmansk Army Group was renamed the 14th Army, it was required to transfer the command of the 47th Rifle Corps to the northern part of Karelia, form the command of the 9th Army of a reduced composition, transfer to the 8th command of the 1st Rifle Corps and one tank brigade, and to transfer the command of the 7th Army to the Karelian Isthmus<sup>438</sup>. On November 17, the People's Commissar of Defense issued Directive No. 0205/op, which demanded "to complete the concentration and be ready for a decisive offensive in order to defeat" the enemy in the shortest possible time and contained specific tasks for all armies of the LVO, but without specifying the start time of the operation<sup>439</sup>. On the basis of this directive, the Military Council of the LVO, by its directive No. 4715ss / s of November 21, set specific combat missions for the armies and fleets, noting that the date for the start of the operation would be specified additionally. Probably, difficulties with the concentration and deployment of troops forced the Soviet command to postpone the start of the

war with Finland until the end of November. On November 28, KBF submarines entered positions <sup>440</sup>. Meanwhile, on November 17, Moscow received a memorandum from the Soviet plenipotentiary in Helsinki, in which he proposed a number of measures to put pressure on Finland. It was necessary to "create an exacerbated tense situation on the Soviet-Finnish border", widely covered in the Soviet press, to organize demonstrations of the population in Leningrad and other cities. "If, after these measures, the Finnish government does not satisfy our demands, then the next step should be to break the non-aggression pact with all the ensuing consequences, the application of which should be carried out in time depending on the intern

November anti-Finnish campaign in the press began to gradually increase. On November 23, the Political Directorate of the LVO sent a directive to the troops, which noted that "the Finnish government, being a toy in the hands of the British imperialists, is leading a line to unleash a war against the USSR", refused to conclude an agreement with it, mobilized the army, wages an anti-Soviet campaign and engages in provocations on border. Having gained independence thanks to the socialist revolution in Russia, Finland is now using it "to attack the USSR, turning the country into a springboard for anti-Soviet adventures." It was necessary to explain to the personnel that "it's time to put an end to the provocateurs of war", to expose the lie about the USSR's desire for the Sovietization of Finland, since "we are not going as conquerors, but as friends of the Finnish people. The Red Army will support the Finnish people, who stand for friendship with the Soviet Union and wants to have its own Finnish truly people's government. On November 26, TASS

reported that at 15.45 Finnish artillery shelled Soviet territory near the village of Mainila on the Karelian Isthmus, as a result of which 4 Soviet servicemen were killed and 9 wounded<sup>443</sup>. Until now, in historiography, a discussion continues regarding the actual side of these events. Now the official Soviet version, which considered this incident as a Finnish provocation, is openly supported only by a few authors<sup>444</sup>. Some researchers do not define their position, limiting themselves to a retelling of events<sup>445</sup>, others cautiously suggest that, and many believe that this incident could have been organized by the Soviet side<sup>446</sup>, a side<sup>447</sup>. Be that as it may, on the evening of November 26, casus belli created by the Soviet a Soviet note was handed to Finland, stating that

"the concentration of Finnish troops near Leningrad not only poses a threat to Leningrad, but also represents in fact a hostile act against the USSR, which has already led to an attack on Soviet troops and to the victims." To prevent new provocations, Moscow demanded the withdrawal of Finnish troops 20-25 km from the border<sup>448</sup>. This note again raised the issue of policy towards the USSR before the Finnish government. In principle, the withdrawal of troops on the Karelian Isthmus would not have violated the Finnish defense system, but this meant giving in to Soviet pressure, for which the political leadership of Finland was not ready. In addition, in Helsinki, these Soviet actions were perceived as nothing more than a "war of nerves" started by Moscow. On November 27, a Finnish response note was handed over to the Soviet leadership, which denied the involvement of Finnish troops in the incident mentioned, it was proposed to create a joint Soviet-Finnish commission to investigate it and "start negotiations on the issue of a mutual withdrawal of troops on. Thus, the response of Helsinki confirmed that known distance from the border. Finland continues to take an withdraw Soviet troops from the border uncompromising position, and the proposal to caused sharp discontent in Moscow. The Soviet note of November 28 qualified the Finnish position as deeply hostile to the USSR and violating the requirements of the non-aggression pact. Therefore, "the Soviet government considers itself compelled to declare that from this date it considers itself free from the obligations assumed by virtue of the non-aggression pact" <sup>450</sup>. Of course, this form of denunciation of the treaty was a violation of the procedure provided for in its text.

On the same day, new incidents took place on the border in Karelia and the Arctic,<sup>451</sup> which were used on November 29 by the Soviet side to break off diplomatic relations with Finland. On this day, speaking on the radio, Molotov blamed the situation on the Finnish government, denied rumors about the USSR encroachment on the sovereignty and independence of Finland and interference in its relations with other countries, and stated that the USSR considers Finland an independent country and is ready to "render assistance to the people of Finland in ensuring their free and independent development". The desire to ensure the security of the USSR and Leningrad, which cannot be made "depending on the evil will of the current Finnish rulers," forces the Soviet government to solve this problem "in friendly cooperation with the Finnish

452 In the meantime, in Helsinki, they decided to resort to delaying tactics again, and the Finnish ambassador in Moscow received a note from his government containing agreement to negotiations on the unilateral withdrawal of Finnish troops from the border and a proposal to refer the conflict that had arisen to the decision of a neutral arbitrator. Apparently, 29 November was the last day when Finland could have avoided war through serious concessions to the USSR, but such an option was not even discussed in Helsinki. Moreover, they continued to believe that the situation on the border was "not very tense". Dongarov, who considers the above events of November 26-29, 1939, as a Soviet ultimatum to Finland, which was accepted by Finland, but after the rupture of diplomatic relations, which gave Moscow a formal reason not to take this answer into account<sup>453</sup> is not true. Finland, the Soviet leadership intended , to resolve the issue of its post-war

structure by creating a pro-Soviet puppet government, which, as originally expected, would be headed by the secretary of the Finnish Communist Party, A. Tuominen, who was in Stockholm, summoned to Moscow on November 13. However, Tuominen shied away from this "honor", and at the head of the "people's government", which, according to Moscow, should soon settle in Helsinki and head the "leadership of the future people's power in the territory liberated (from the then Finnish authorities)"<sup>454</sup>, was appointed Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Comintern O.V. Kuusinen. In addition to the Chairman and Minister of Foreign Affairs Kuusinen, the "People's Government" included Mauri Rosenberg (Deputy Chairman and Minister of Finance), Aksel Anttila (Minister of Defense), Tuure Lekhen (Minister of the Interior), Armas Eikia (Minister of Agriculture), Inkeri Lehtinen (Minister of education) and Paavo Prokkonen (Minister of Affairs of Karelia). It was believed that the use in propaganda of the fact of the creation of a "people's government" and the conclusion of a mutual assistance agreement with it, indicating friendship and alliance with the USSR while maintaining Finland's independence, would make it possible to influence the Finnish population, increasing decay in the army and in the rear.

On November 11, 1939, the formation of the first corps of the "Finnish People's Army" (originally the 106th Mountain Rifle Division) began, which was staffed by Finns and Karelians who served in the LVO troops. By November 26, there were 13,405 people in the corps, and in February 1940, 25,000 servicemen who wore their national uniforms, but did not take part in the battles. On December 13, 1939, the text of the "Military Oath of the People's Army of Finland" was prepared, compiled by A.A. Zhdanov according to the text This Finland for the . "people's" army was to replace the oaths of the Red Army<sup>455</sup> in occupation units of the Red Army and become the military support of the "people's" government. In the Propaganda and Agitation Department of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, a draft instruction was prepared "How to start the political and organizational work of the communists (this word is crossed out by Zhdanov. - M.M.) in areas liberated from white power," which indicated practical measures to the creation was used in of a popular front in the occupied Finnish In December 1939, this instruction work with the population of the territory<sup>456</sup>. Finnish Karelia, but the withdrawal of Soviet troops led to f

According to the Soviet operational plan, the 14th Army operated in the Far North, which had the task, with the support of the Northern Fleet, to occupy the Rybachy and Sredny peninsulas and the Petsamo region and, having created defenses in the event of a landing on the Murmansk coast and taking into account the possibility of Norway participating in the war, to further advance on Rovaniemi. The troops of the 9th Army were deployed in the White Sea Karelia, the purpose of which was to cut Finland in the narrowest part of the country with a swift blow and, acting through Kemijärvi and Suomussalmi, reach the coast of the Gulf of Bothnia from Kemi to Oulu. The 8th Army operated in Ladoga Karelia, with the goal of reaching the Joensuu-Tokhmajarvi-Sortavala line in 10 days and then, by striking at the rear of the Finnish troops on the Karelian Isthmus, to assist the troops of the 7th Army in their defeat. Subsequently, an attack on Mikkeli and Kuopio was envisaged. The main Soviet forces were

deployed on the Karelian Isthmus as part of the 7th Army, which was faced with the task of defeat the opposing troops, in cooperation with the 8th Army, break through defensive line of the Finns and go to the front Hiitola - Antrea - Vyborg with subsequent offensive on Helsinki, Lahti, Hyvinia. On the night of November 29, the headquarters of the LVO received an order from the morning of November 30 to put into effect the directive of the People's Commissar of Defense of November 17 and launch an invasion of Finland. Table 10

Balance of  
forces as of November 30, 1939 459 Finnish  
Army Red Army Calculated division ratio 14 24 1:  
1.7 Personnel 265,000 425,640 1:  
1.6 Guns and mortars 534 2,876 1: 5.4  
Tanks 26 2 289 1: 88 Aircraft 270 2,446  
1: 9.1

where 46.2% of Soviet and 50.2% of Finnish troops were concentrated<sup>461</sup>. Superiority Soviet troops on the Karelian Isthmus, where Finnish troops occupied fortified position of the Mannerheim Line, which, in the opinion of the Commander-in-Chief of the British by the armed forces of General Kirk, "no army is able to defeat" <sup>462</sup>, was only 63 thousand people, which was not enough for a successful offensive. However less Soviet troops had the task of defeating the enemy in Karelian in 8-10 days isthmus and north of Lake Ladoga and create conditions for an attack on Helsinki and occupation of the whole country. At 0800 on November 30, Soviet troops deployed on the border with Finland, began artillery preparation and half an hour later they crossed the border. The Military Council of the LVO was "firmly convinced that the troops ... will honorably fulfill their sacred duty to the Motherland, completely destroy the White Finnish army and thus forever they will close the access to the Gulf of Finland and the city of Leningrad to the warmongers"<sup>463</sup>. However all these optimistic calculations were overturned due to the poor preparation of the Soviet troops to action in the Finnish theater of operations and the successful actions of the enemy. As a result instead of a lightning-fast 15-day campaign, the Red Army had to conduct a protracted 105-daytime war, which is traditionally divided into three periods.

On November 30 - December 26, 1939, the first offensive of the Soviet troops took place<sup>464</sup> On . On the Karelian Isthmus, the troops of the 7th Army fell into the security zone of the Mannerheim Line, where a few Finnish detachments delivered sudden blows, moving away from one line to another. Only on December 4-10 did Soviet troops reach the main strip of the Mannerheim Line along its entire length from Lake Ladoga to the Gulf of Finland. December 2-5 Soviet the command demanded to break through the Finnish fortifications on Taipaleenjoki and create conditions to enter the breakthrough of the 10th tank corps for operations behind enemy lines. However an offensive undertaken without proper preparation led only to the capture of a small foothold in front of the Finnish fortifications. December 7 Meretskov was appointed commander 7th Army, and the troops received an order to break through the enemy fortifications on the left flank in Sum area. Meanwhile, the right-flank group of commander V.D. Grandal 15-17 December made an attempt to break through the enemy fortifications on Vuoksa, but was not successful. 17- On December 21, troops of the 7th Army undertook an operation to break through to Vyborg in the Summa and Lyakhde, but the well-equipped positions of the Finns withstood, despite the active artillery and aviation training. In Finland, these fights, which contributed to strengthening the moral stamina of the troops, dubbed the "miracle of the Sum", and the Finnish troops on the isthmus even launched a counterattack on December 23-24, but their weak preparation for large-scale maneuvering operations and overall superiority in firepower Soviet troops. The last attempt to break through was the unsuccessful attack of the Grendal group

through Lake Suvanto on December 25-27, and the planned operation "Ladoga" to break through in the Vyborg direction was postponed on December 28. As a result, the positional struggle on the Karelian Isthmus became a fact. On December 26, the 13th Army was created on the basis of the Grendal group. On the front of the 8th Army,

Soviet troops began to advance into Finland along several relatively isolated roads and by December 8 advanced 50-85 km from the border. The Finnish command could not allow the loss of this important area and, taking advantage of the slow advance of the 7th Army on the Karelian Isthmus, transferred additional forces here, from which the group of Colonel P. Talvel, a veteran of the battles of 1919-1922, was formed. In Karelia. On December 13-24, in the Tolvajärvi area, the Finns, with daring and skillful actions, stopped and forced the 139th and 75th Soviet divisions to retreat more than 50 km, after which this sector of the front stabilized until the end of the war. In the second half of December, the enemy launched a series of attacks against the 18th and 168th Soviet divisions advancing along the shore of Lake Ladoga, which were forced to stop the offensive and go on the defensive. On December 28, these Soviet units were blocked from the rear. Thus, it was not possible to use the troops of the 8th Army to reach the rear of the Finnish troops on the Karelian Isthmus.

To the north, on the front of the 9th Army, the 54th Mountain Rifle Division was advancing on Kuhmoniemi, advancing to Rusty by December 6th. In the second half of December, the enemy launched a series of counterattacks and, having driven back the Soviet units, began an operation to encircle the division. To the north, the 163rd Rifle Division reached Suomussalmi on December 8, but on December 11 the enemy cut its communications. Then the command of the 9th Army sent the 44th Rifle Division, which had just arrived from Ukraine, to help, which advanced rather slowly, and soon completely stopped. In the Kandalaksha direction, by December 16, the 122nd Infantry Division advanced 200 km into Finland and reached the approaches to Kemijärvi. On December 17-19, the Finns launched a counterattack, forcing the Soviet units to retreat 20 km to Salla, where the front had stabilized.

On the northernmost sector of the front, Soviet troops captured Petsamo on December 2 and began to move south. By December 18, the 52nd Infantry Division advanced to 110 km of the Rovaniemskoye Highway, where it entrenched itself.

November 30 - December 3, the landing forces of the KBF captured the islands of Seyskari, Penisari, Lavansari, Narvi, Sursari, Tyutyarsari. On December 6, Finland and Sweden announced the joint mining of the waters of the Åland archipelago, and the USSR imposed a naval blockade of Finland on December 9. On December 10, Soviet submarines sank the Estonian ship Kassari and the German ship Bolheim. On December 17, Schulenburg tried to find out if the actions of the Soviet Navy had caused his death, and asked "to guarantee the safety of the navigation of German ships," but Molotov said that the KBF was not involved in this. For his part, Schulenburg warned the USSR about the dangers of sailing to the shores of England, and Molotov noted the dangers of sailing to Finland<sup>465</sup>. Nevertheless, the Soviet naval command on December 18 issued an order not to attack German ships in the blockade zone. On December 28, the Finnish ship Vilpas was sunk.<sup>466</sup> The outbreak of the Soviet-Finnish war focused the attention of the great powers on the North of Europe. A powerful anti-Soviet campaign was launched in the press, which actively used the idea of

the danger of a "world communist revolution." On December 2, 1939, the United States imposed a "moral embargo" on the supply of aviation equipment and technology to the USSR. On December 3, 1939, Finland applied to the League of Nations, which decided to convene a meeting of the Council of the League on December 9 to discuss the fact of the Soviet attack on Finland. The USSR, as a member of the Council, was invited to this meeting on December 4, but, referring to the absence of war and friendly relations with the "government of the Finnish Democratic Republic", which it recognized as the only legitimate government of Finland, the Soviet government refused this invitation. In the meantime, the Assembly of the League of Nations convened created a Committee on the Finnish Question, which on December 12 called on the USSR and

Finland "cease hostilities and begin, through the mediation of the Assembly, immediate negotiations to restore peace." Unlike the Finnish government, the Soviet government rejected the proposal on the same day. As a result, on December 14, 1939, under pressure from the United States and France, the USSR was expelled from the League of

Nations. Naturally, Moscow condemned this decision of the League of Nations, which, moreover, was taken in violation of the voting procedure in the Council of the League, and stated that the USSR "is now relieved of the obligation to bear moral responsibility for the inglorious deeds of the League of Nations", "is not connected with the League of Nations pact and will henceforth have free hands. On December 16, the League of Nations adopted a resolution calling on the members of this organization to provide assistance to Finland, which allowed the Western allies to launch preparations for military operations against the USSR. True, in London and Paris they doubted that they would have time to provide real assistance, since it was believed that the USSR would quickly occupy Finland. However, the stubborn resistance of the Finnish troops and the difficulties of the theater of operations led to the fact that the war dragged on, and England and France

were able to supply the Finns with weapons and launch preparations for the invasion of Scandinavia. On December 19, at the insistence of France, the Supreme Council of the Allies discussed the idea of occupying Scandinavia to prevent the supply of ore to Germany and to provide assistance to Finland. In addition, it was believed that the actions of the Allies in the North of Europe would provoke Germany into retaliatory measures, and this would draw her into the struggle in the peripheral theater of operations and make it difficult to attack France in the spring of 1940. However, France's proposal to break off diplomatic relations with the USSR was not supported by England, which considered it "premature", counting on the fact that Moscow itself will take this step. However, the Soviet side was not going to inflate the conflict with England and France, limiting itself to propaganda condemning their hostile position. The Western allies launched preparations for military intervention in the Soviet-Finnish war, hoping that this would allow them to draw the USSR into the war "at worst, on the side of Germany, at best ... or

Of the Scandinavian countries, Sweden provided the most assistance to Finland, providing military, economic and humanitarian assistance for 490 million crowns (19.6% of the budget), which was quite understandable, given its geographical location. At the same time, already on December 4, Sweden offered its mediation in Soviet-Finnish relations, but Moscow, confident in an imminent military victory, rejected it. Norway provided only economic aid and transit for military materials. Although on December 7 the foreign ministers of the Scandinavian countries decided to seek an end to the Soviet-Finnish war through the League of Nations, they abstained from voting on the question of excluding the USSR from it. On December 9, TASS officially denied rumors about the intention of the USSR to extend military operations to the territory of other Scandinavian countries<sup>469</sup>. Germany's position in the Soviet-

Finnish war was rather cautious and was determined by the unwillingness to intervene in the conflict and the desire to use the worsening relations between the USSR and the Anglo-French allies. Officially, Germany did not provide any support to Finland, but unofficially notified Sweden that its intervention in the Soviet-Finnish war would not be a reason for the German invasion, but Germany would not allow the intervention of England and France. On December 10, Hitler authorized the supply of weapons to Sweden, which was supposed to compensate her for the weapons transferred to Finland, which was formalized by an agreement of January 27, 1940. On December 9, Molotov conveyed to Schulenburg an expression of concern from the Soviet government regarding the transportation through Germany of 50 fighter aircraft from Italy to Finland, stating, that Italy's behavior is "defiant" and "outrageous" and that the Soviet government of December 11 cannot understand Germany's assistance in this matter. Germany it was strictly neutral and there was no transit. On December 10, the command of replied that the Red Banner Baltic Fleet turned to Germany with a request to provide auxiliary vessels to organize the supply of Soviet submarines for operations



in the Gulf of Bothnia, and although the German leadership agreed, on December 17 Molotov stated that such a request was not official<sup>471</sup>. On December

19-22, England and France called on the Scandinavian countries to expand their assistance to Finland, promising them support in case of complications with Moscow. At the same time, the British Admiralty began developing plans for mining Norwegian territorial waters and landing troops in Narvik. On December 27-28, the allies again offered Norway and Sweden to support Finland and promised help against the USSR and Germany. On December 31, the British military leadership submitted to the government a memorandum on the military consequences of intervention in the Soviet-Finnish war. As a worthy goal for the actions of the allied forces in northern Europe, the Swedish iron ore mining in Gällivare and provoking Germany to retaliate to create a new front, which was supposed to tie down significant forces of the German army, were called. Supporting the Finns would have been a side effect of the operation, which could have been carried out at the end of March 1940.<sup>472</sup> The Anglo-French press began discussing plans

for action in Scandinavia. It is clear that on January 2-4, 1940, Germany declared to Norway and Sweden that it was against the Anglo-French plans to draw neutrals into the war. Under these conditions, on January 3, Sweden replied to the allies that its assistance and facilitation of the transit of military supplies to Finland did not go beyond the framework of neutrality and that it was not going to interfere in the European war. On January 6, the USSR handed over notes to Norway and Sweden, in which, pointing to the facts of their support for Finland, it stated that such actions not only contradicted their neutrality, "but could also lead to undesirable complications" in relations with the USSR. On January 6, Norway, and on January 10, Sweden, replied that the actions listed in the Soviet note were due to private initiative, and were not government policy, and assured Moscow that they remained and would remain neutral<sup>473</sup>. For

its part, Germany took into account the possibility of peaceful penetration into Scandinavia with the help of the "fifth column" of Quisling, who visited Berlin on December 10-18, 1939, where he negotiated with the German leadership, urging him to speed up the occupation of Norway by Wehrmacht units. As a result, on December 13, Hitler ordered the preliminary study of the operation against Norway. On January 10, 1940, the OKW headquarters began developing the operation, although even among the German naval leadership there was no complete confidence in the advisability of carrying it out. On January 27, a working headquarters was created to develop the operation under the OKW, which on February 21 was headed by General N. von Falkenhorst. On February 29, he presented Hitler with a plan for an operation to seize Denmark and Norway, and on March 1, the Fuhrer signed a directive for Operation Weserübung. For its implementation, the 21st Army Group (7 infantry, 2 mountain infantry divisions and 1 motorized infantry brigade) and the main forces of the fleet were allocated. From the air, the troops were supposed to be supported by the 5th Air Fleet, which

During the development of the operation, the commander-in-chief of the German fleet, Raeder, proposed turning the Nord base near Murmansk into the main springboard for the capture of Narvik. Initially, it was assumed that "transports with materiel, and possibly troops" would be sent to the base, since from there "the path to go to the area of operation is shorter" than from Germany. Then this plan was changed, and only the Jan Wellem tanker left the Nord base, which arrived in Narvik on April 8 and provided fuel for the German ships that landed troops, while two tankers sailing from Germany were sunk by the British. This tanker breakthrough from the north played an important role in the actions of the German Navy at Narvik. Moreover, the Soviet authorities released the tanker from the Motovsky Bay only on the condition that it would not return<sup>474</sup>.

Meanwhile, a period of trench warfare began on the Soviet-Finnish front, which lasted approximately from December 27, 1939 to January 31, 1940.<sup>475</sup> The Soviet command continued to reinforce the troops operating in Finland, improved the organizational structure, equipment and training of troops. Jan. 7

In 1940, the troops operating on the Karelian Isthmus were united into the North-Western Front, where 26 Soviet divisions were concentrated. The front command decided to strike the main blow in the direction of Vyborg, the troops learned to block and destroy enemy strongholds, and revealed the enemy's defense system. On January 16, the Headquarters approved the plan of the operation to break through to Vyborg, determined the composition of the front and the time of the offensive on February 4-6, 1940.

15 Soviet divisions were concentrated in Ladoga Karelia, which, given the poor development of communications in this area, was in itself a well-known achievement. However, the combat operations of the parties developed relatively sluggishly, the attempts of the offensive by the Soviet troops did not give significant success. The Finns continued to block the 18th and 168th Soviet divisions, and the command of the 8th Army periodically sent newly arriving troops to deblockade these units. However, due to poor organization, counterattacks usually ended in needless casualties.

To the north, on the front of the 9th Army, fighting continued in the Raata Suomussalmi area, where the Finns, having received reinforcements, attacked the main forces of the 163rd Division on December 27 and soon basically defeated them, then blocked them, and by January 8, 1940 they defeated and 44th Soviet division. After that, the main forces of the 9th Finnish division were sent to fight the 54th Soviet division in the Kuhmo area, where it was finally blocked on January 29-31, 1940. To the north, the 122nd Infantry Division retreated east to Merkäjärvi on January 11-16, but managed to avoid encirclement, continuing the maneuver war with detachments of Finnish skiers. In the Arctic, the 52nd Infantry Division continued to occupy the defense, and the enemy did not have the strength for more serious actions than sabotage on its communications.

The prolongation of the war, along with the widespread popularization of the slogan of the "liberation mission" of the Red Army, gave rise to many "unhealthy" and "anti-Soviet" sentiments in the Soviet troops. If on the eve and in the first weeks of the war hatred moods and expectations of a quick victory prevailed, then from the end of December 1939, the Special Departments noted a sharp increase in negative sentiments in the Army. The Red Army soldier Tseplenkov declared: "From the moment of rapprochement with Germany, the policy of the Soviet government became completely clear to me. In general, we have become "liberators" and are transferring the revolution on bayonets abroad." A Red Army soldier of the 554th Infantry Regiment of the 138th Infantry Division of the 7th Army, Veselov, believed: "We are giving the Finns a brotherly hand, but in our villages they are sitting without bread. They just started the war, and already there is no bread. We liberate the Finnish people, who do not exist. War started because ours simply wanted to capture Finland. According to the Red Army soldier of the 2nd company of the 205th rifle regiment V.S. Peredchenko: "Our Soviet Union got in the wrong place and Finland cannot be defeated. They only boast that there is a lot of equipment in the USSR. A month has passed, but the Finns do not give in. They think that here, as in Poland, forgetting that Poland was defeated by the Germans. We are all here We'll disappear and we'll all be killed." Red Army soldier of the reconnaissance company of the 217th Infantry Regiment, member of the Komsomol P.P. Lyakovsky believed: "Yes, 11 million Ukrainians and Belarusians were liberated, but the same number of our people will fall on the territory of Finland. The USSR is waging war not with the goal of liberating the Finnish people, but with the goal of

capturing Finland. These actions of the Soviet government cannot be considered correct. policy of capture"476 Morozov, assistant chief of the 4th part of headquarters of the 4th rifle division of the 13th army, asked the question: "I do not understand why our government continues to wage war with the Finns, we have reached the line of the intended border and the danger to Leningrad has been eliminated and This will end the war." Technician quartermaster of the 1st rank of the 204th anti-tank division of the 163rd rifle division of the 9th army Ustinov believed that "the USSR was expelled from the League of Nations. 12 states organized against the USSR, they all help Finland. The situation is difficult, they will put us all here why it had to be done, because now you can't cover up our aggression with anything." The commander of the 173rd Infantry Regiment of the 90th Infa

the government of Finland is only a screen with the help of which the Soviet Union cultivates public opinion, and there, when we end the war, then it will restore Soviet power and the matter is over" 477 Simonenko, a

Red Army soldier of the 54th separate reconnaissance battalion of the 8th army, believed: "We started a war, not could negotiate peacefully with Finland, found some kind of People's Government, which no one has seen and does not know, perhaps it does not exist, and concluded an agreement with it. They help the workers and peasants of Finland, whom we also did not see. They are running from us. Only the people are destroyed. How many of ours have already been killed and wounded. " According to the Red Army soldier of the 302nd howitzer artillery regiment of the 123rd rifle division Kuznetsov, "The Soviet Union wants to establish Soviet power in Finland, so it went to war. After Finland, it's Sweden's turn. Our rulers liked to take someone else's. They took Poland, Estonia and Latvia too, but choked on Finland. "The commander of the 2nd machine-gun company of the 128th rifle division of the Ural military district, Mokrynsky, believed that" the Soviet Union's policy is such that we do not want foreign land, but in fact we try appropriate other people's lands in every possible way. Poland was taken away, Finland will be taken away, and then they will fight with Turkey "478. As a result, the Political Directorate of the Red Army, by its Directive No. borders" and Leningrad, "to liquidate the springboard for the war of the imperialists against the USSR" 479 Meanwhile, on January 6, England notified Norway and Sweden that the expansion of German

operations at sea could require the allies to act in their territorial waters. On January 7, both Scandinavian countries asked London not to allow On January 9, Sweden signaled to the Allies that it would defend its neutrality, and Norway took a similar position on January 11. As a result, these British plans were shelved on January 12. In response to British demands for a reduction in Swedish ore supplies to Germany, Sweden 23 January agreed to the secret transit of British volunteers to Finland. On the same day, England proposed that Norway either mine its territorial waters or close part of them to foreign navigation. Naturally, the Norwegian government tried to evade such drastic measures. The uncompromising position of Norway and Sweden forced England and France to develop other options. By January 16, France had developed a plan for the landing operation in Petsamo, which, after discussion by the Supreme Council of the Allies on February 5, despite the skepticism of England, was adopted as the basis for further military planning. By February 15, a specific plan of operation was prepared in the Petsamo area, which provided for the landing and capture of the port in the 20th of March, followed by an attack on the territory of the USSR with the aim of capturing Kandalaksha and Murmansk. However, the British command was more interested in using the territory of Norway and Sweden to harm German interests. True, the British leadership had to take into account the negative consequences of violating the neutrality

of the Scandinavian countries, so military training was carried out under the guise of helping Finland. As a result, a plan was developed in London for the landing of troops in Narvik, the occupation of the territory of Norway and Sweden, with the subsequent help of Finland by the Allied troops, who would act under the guise of "volunteers". Thus, having decided to provide direct military assistance to Finland from about March 20, 1940, England and France in early March were ready to send troops to the north. Helsinki, Stockholm and Oslo were notified of this, and the allies only waited for the official appeal of the Finns for help and the consent of the Swedes and Norwegians to let the troops through. At the beginning of February, the Soviet command began probing the Finnish defenses on the Karelian Isthmus.

February, in the Summa area, after massive artillery and aviation preparation, Soviet troops stormed the Mannerheim line, but did not achieve significant success. During the fighting on February 5, after many hours of artillery preparation, a significant part of the Finnish fortifications was destroyed, although the front was not broken through. On February 6, the attacks continued, and only the commissioning of the tactical reserves of the Finns allowed them to hold the front. On February 7, the fighting subsided, and the Soviet side limited itself to only shelling the enemy. The general offensive of the troops of the North-Western Front began on February 11 with almost 3 hours of artillery and aviation preparation. The Soviet troops delivered the main blow on the Summa-Lyakhde front, although the fighting went on almost along the entire front. Already on the first day, the attackers managed to wedge into the Finnish defense for 1-1.5 km. Three days later, the depth of the breakthrough reached 4 km, and the Soviet command decided to increase the force of the strike. By the evening of February 14, a gap was made in the Finnish defenses 4 km along the front and 8-10 km in depth. On February 15, Mannerheim gave the order to withdraw troops to the second defensive line, and the Soviet units continued to expand the breakthrough. On February 14-16, the troops of the 13th Army also broke through the front, and the central part of the Mannerheim Line was overco

On the night of February 17, the Finnish troops began to withdraw, and the rate of advance of the Soviet units increased to 6-10 km per day. By February 21, Soviet troops reached the second lane of the Mannerheim Line and captured the city of Koivisto and the coast of the Vyborg Bay. In the second position, the front temporarily stabilized, and on February 26, the Finns decided to throw 15 of their tanks into the counterattack, most of which were lost without any result. As a result, the Finnish command decided to again withdraw troops to the rear line. On February 28, Soviet troops resumed their offensive along the entire front and began to advance after the retreating enemy to Vyborg, on the outskirts of which they reached by March 3. The troops of the 7th Army covered Vyborg from two sides. Bypassing the city from the east, the 50th Rifle Corps in the area of the Saimaa Canal fell into the flood zone, which had to be forced before the troops approached the Finnish fortifications. From the west, troops of the 28th and 10th rifle corps operated, which on March 4-8 crossed the Vyborg Bay on the ice and, despite fierce enemy resistance, captured bridgeheads on the coast and cut the Vyborg-Helsinki highway.

Meanwhile, east of Lake Ladoga, the opponents also stepped up their operations. The strengthening of the Soviet troops led to the creation on February 12 of another - the 15th - army from the formations of the southern group of the 8th army. These troops were again ordered to break through to Sortavala, but this task was never completed. Attempts to deblockade the 18th and 168th rifle divisions also failed. On February 18-29, the Finns defeated the 18th division, although some of the personnel made their way to their own. Despite some progress, the Soviet troops failed to inflict a decisive defeat on the enemy. To the north, the 54th Division continued to fight in encirclement until the end of the war, the 88th Division approached the 122nd Infantry Division, and the 52nd Division occupied Nautsi on March 7th.

But the main events took place on the Karelian Isthmus, where the troops of the 7th Army on March 7-9 broke through to the outskirts of Vyborg and occupied part of the city by March 12. Meanwhile, the troops of the 13th Army crossed the Vuoksa River by March 11 and created a threat to the rear of the Finnish troops deployed along Taipalenjoki and Suvanto. The Finnish army faced the threat of complete defeat, which Mannerheim reported to the government on March 9. All this hastened the decision of the Finnish leadership to agree to Soviet peace terms. On March 13, fierce battles were going on in Vyborg, which continued for another 2 hours after the ceasefire agreement came into force, but the city center was never taken by Soviet troops.

As the Soviet offensive expanded, Finland on February 1, 5 and 13 asked Sweden for help with troops and military materials, but the Swedish leadership refused to send troops to the front. On February 16, Sweden officially announced that it would not send its troops to Finland and would not let foreign troops through its territory. This position aroused the approval of the USSR and the discontent of Finland. Norway also took a wait-and-see attitude, fearing being drawn into a European war, especially since this

On the same day, the British Navy seized the German supply ship "Altmark" in Norwegian territorial waters. Sweden also served as a channel for diplomatic soundings between Moscow and Helsinki. As early as December 24, the Swedes offered their mediation, and on December 27 the Soviet side generally supported this idea. However, Finland was not inclined to use this channel, believing that US or German mediation could play a greater role. However, during January 1940, it became clear that neither Berlin nor Washington would be able to take on this mission, moreover, Moscow until the end of January 1940 refused to conduct any negotiations with the legitimate government of Finland. Only after Finland's official request for mediation to Sweden, which followed on January 24, 1940, did the Soviet leadership on January 29 express their readiness to enter into negotiations on the conditions for achieving peace. True, this sounding did not give any tangible results. A new round of negotiations began only at the end of February, when the situation changed<sup>482</sup>

The USSR tried by diplomatic measures to influence England, to prevent its intervention in the Soviet-Finnish war. On January 30, the British Foreign Ministry was asked to "localize" the Finnish problem in Soviet-British relations, but the parties understood this idea differently, and it was not put into practice<sup>483</sup>. Since the Anglo-French allies considered the Soviet-Finnish war as the first step of the USSR towards strengthening its influence in Scandinavia, Moscow on February 22, 1940 brought to the attention of London that it was not going to affect Norway and Sweden if they did not intervene in the war. At the same time, the USSR offered England to act as an intermediary between it and Finland to conclude peace on the terms of transferring the entire Karelian Isthmus with Vyborg and the northern coast of Lake Ladoga with Sortavala to the USSR and leasing Khanko. At the same time, the USSR agreed to leave Petsamo to Finland<sup>484</sup>. On the same day, Finland asked England and France to put pressure on the USSR, persuading it to start peace negotiations, but this request was left without consequences. On February 24, the British government, having approved the Soviet position in relation to Norway and Sweden, refused to mediate in Soviet-Finnish relations, since it was "not, and most importantly, not interested in ending the war in accordance with the given peace conditions"<sup>485</sup>. It is clear that such a position of London did not improve Soviet-British relations.

Meanwhile, on February 21, Finland asked Sweden for mediation, and since England rejected a similar Soviet request, Moscow agreed to the mediation of the Swedes. True, the Finnish leadership was still not ready to discuss peace on Soviet terms and on February 23 asked Sweden to send troops and allow the transit of the Anglo-French Expeditionary Force, but Stockholm promised to let only volunteers through. On February 25, Norway, Denmark and Sweden announced the need to end the Soviet-Finnish war. On February 26, a request came again from Helsinki to allow the transit of foreign troops, but Sweden, citing the German threat, rejected it. Moreover, Finland was told that if the Allies tried to land on Swedish territory without permission, Sweden would take the side of the USSR. The defeats at the front and the tough position of Sweden made the Finnish leadership think about peace, which was notified to England on February 29. Under these conditions, the Western allies again assured Finland that the troops would arrive on time, and on March 1, the Finns decided not to rush into negotiations with the USSR. This irritated Sweden, which on March 1-3 again put pressure on Helsinki. On March 2, England and France turned to Norway and Sweden for permission to transit troops if there was an official request from Finland. The landing dates were tentatively scheduled for March 20, and help against Germany was promised, but on March 3-4, Sweden and Norway again gave a negative answer<sup>486</sup>

Having learned about the uncompromising position of the Scandinavian countries, in Helsinki on March 5 they decided to postpone the appeal to England and France for a week. The agreement of Finland with the peace conditions put forward by the USSR allowed the Soviet government on March 6 to declare its readiness for peace negotiations, and on March 7 the Finnish delegation flew to Moscow. During the negotiations in

In Moscow on March 8-12, 1940, the Finnish delegation, using the usual diplomatic tricks, tried in every possible way to soften the peace conditions put forward by the Soviet side. Naturally, England and France, with their promises of unlimited assistance, tried to force Helsinki to refuse to accept the Soviet proposals. On March 11, Finland asked Norway and Sweden about their attitude to the transit of Allied troops and to a defensive alliance with Finland after the war. Both countries answered negatively to the first and positively to the second question. On March 12, England and France again asked Norway and Sweden for transit and again received negative answers. On the same day, at the insistence of France, the Allies decided to land troops in Narvik and Trondheim on March 20, but the news of the Soviet-Finnish peace treaty led to the cancellation of this decision<sup>487</sup>.

In the face of a sharply increased threat of intervention in the war by England and France, the Soviet leadership was forced to negotiate and conclude peace with the legitimate Finnish authorities. For its part, the Finnish leadership, given the vague promises of the allies, the intransigence of Sweden and Norway on the issue of the transit of foreign troops and the threat of the collapse of the Finnish front under the onslaught of the Red Army, was forced to accept Soviet demands, and at 2.00 on March 13, 1940, a peace treaty between the USSR and Finland was signed. Under these conditions, the decisive thing for Finland was the desire to preserve the army at the cost of losing territories, in order to be able to return what was lost in the future. During the war, Soviet troops lost 131,476 people killed and missing, 264,908 people wounded and sick, irretrievable losses amounted to 406 aircraft, 653 tanks and 422 guns and mortars. The total cost of the war exceeded 7.5 billion rubles. Finnish troops also suffered serious losses, losing 22,830 people killed and missing, 43,557 people wounded, 62 aircraft. The Soviet-Finnish treaty deprived England, 500 guns and mortars, 50 tanks<sup>488</sup> France and Germany of a convenient pretext for chiefs of staff of the British armed forces, intervention in Scandinavia, but, according to the gave the "USSR the opportunity to dominate the Gulf of Finland and strengthen its strategic positions in the Gulf of Bothnia and in the Baltics against Germany"<sup>489</sup>. On March 31, the Karelian ASSR was transformed into the Karelian Finnish SSR, and on April 9, Soviet troops were evacuated from Petsamo<sup>490</sup>

The conclusion of peace with Finland on March 12, 1940, against the backdrop of general joy and relief, nevertheless also gave rise to "unhealthy" sentiments in the Red Army. The junior commander of the 3rd battalion of the Military Medical School, Dobromyslov, believed that "our government did the wrong thing by concluding an agreement with Finland, it was necessary to beat the Finnish White Guard to the end." According to Yasinov, the 2nd rank quartermaster of the 39th Rifle Regiment, Yasinov, "it was necessary to continue the war; the conclusion of an agreement with Finland is politically unprofitable for us. How many fought, how many victims suffered, but they could not take such a small country." The ammunition supply technician of the 113th Artillery Regiment of the 8th Army wondered: "Why was it necessary to conclude an agreement, because we lost so many people, and now we are ending the war. Sooner or later, we will still have to fight with the White Finns." Red Army soldier of the headquarters battery of the 113th Artillery Regiment Tikhonovich: "How so? They fought, fought, lost people, spent money, and now they made peace. After all, the White Finns can deceive us. They will conclude an agreement, strengthen even more, and then again they will provoke a war." Ochkin, a Red Army soldier of the 1st Engineer Battalion of the 14th Army, believed that "our government was frightened of the Anglo-French bloc, so it concluded an agreement." According to the assistant chief of the combat department of the army headquarters, Captain Trigub, "the war was not won, there was no victory in this. What was written and said was all nonsense. there are several times more of us than the Finns." Grebelnikov, a Red Army soldier of the 5th battery of the 150th howitzer artillery regiment of the 23rd rifle corps, believed that "this is a shame for us, the war was started, but not completed, which means our government got scared and concluded an agreement"<sup>491</sup>.

At the beginning of 1940, Norwegian territorial waters became the site of constant skirmishes between the British fleet and German ships, which caused German protests against Norway, and

she, in turn, tried to protest against the actions of the English fleet. On February 23, a Norwegian-German agreement was signed, on March 11, 1940, a Norwegian-English one, and on April 2, an Anglo-Danish trade agreement, which generally reflected a temporary compromise between England and Germany, which were preparing for the occupation of Scandinavia. The beginning of the Soviet-Finnish negotiations forced Germany to speed up military preparations, since the cessation of the war in Finland could lead to the refusal of England and France to land an expeditionary force in Scandinavia, which deprived the German command of a plausible pretext for the occupation of Norway. On March 7, the OKW issued a directive on the strategic deployment of forces for the intended operation. On March 12, the day the Soviet-Finnish peace treaty was signed, the troops of the 21st group were put on alert, but unfavorable weather conditions and a change in the political situation did not allow the operation to begin<sup>492</sup>.

Although in the second half of March 1940 the immediate threat of an Anglo-French invasion of Scandinavia was significantly reduced, the German leadership was well aware that England would not allow the Germans to use Norwegian territorial waters to transport ore to Germany, and on March 26 in Berlin it was decided to capture Denmark and Norway April 8-10. On the night of April 3, the first ships with weapons and troops left the German ports, heading for Northern Norway. On the morning of April 7, the German fleet reached the coast of Norway. For its part, France on March 23 proposed to intensify actions in Scandinavia or the Caucasus. On March 28, the Allied Supreme Council decided to warn Norway and Sweden of possible measures against German shipping in their territorial waters. It was decided to mine Norwegian waters on April 5 and prepare to disrupt the supply of Swedish iron ore from Luleå. For operations in Scandinavia in England, the R-4 plan was developed, which provided for the capture of Narvik around April 10, and the Stratford plan, designed to capture Stavanger, Bergen and Trondheim around April 6-9 and further strengthen the Allied forces. On April 1, a directive was approved for Operation R-4, which was to be carried out in response to German actions or the danger of them. The Allies sought to provoke Germany into active action, which would allow them to get ahead of her and seize strongholds in Scandinavia themselves<sup>493</sup>. On April 5, 1940, England and France handed over notes to Norway and Sweden stating that the USSR was planning

to attack Finland again and create bases for its Navy on the Norwegian coast, and reported on the planned actions of the Allies in Norwegian territorial waters, in response to the threat from the German side. On April 6, directives were approved in London to the command of the expeditionary detachments in Norway and Northern Sweden, but the decision on their landing was still not made. On April 7-8, the English fleet began to advance to the coast of Norway. On the morning of April 8, British ships began to mine the territorial waters of Norway near Narvik. Information about German military preparations that came to London and the capitals of the Scandinavian countries was generally not taken seriously, since excessive importance was attached to British naval power. True, the British focused on controlling access to the Atlantic, as a result of which in the zone of the North and Norwegian Seas by April 8 the ratio of naval forces was only 1.4: 1 in favor of England, which allowed Germany to take a justified risk and make a landing in Norway. Even after a Polish submarine sank a German transport on the afternoon of April 8 and the soldiers who escaped from it claimed they were being taken to Bergen, the Allies had not yet made a conclusion about Germany's intentions. On April 7, Sweden rejected the Anglo-French demarche of April 5 and declared that it would resist the violation of its neutrality. On April 8, Norway protested to England about the mining of its territorial waters, but

decided not to resist the allies. On the same day, Denmark agreed with Germany that in the event of a German invasion, she would protest, but would not resist, and the Soviet

the press sympathized with the neutrals. On the night of April 9, German troops invaded Denmark and Norway. The German Foreign Ministry emphasized the peaceful, friendly and forced nature of this step, taken with the aim of forestalling an Anglo-French invasion. Norway rejected the German note and turned to England for help, which, however, did not prevent the Norwegian government from negotiating an armistice with Germany. However, during the negotiations, Germany nominated Quisling for the post of Norwegian prime minister, which made it impossible to reach an agreement. Norway decided to defend itself, and from April 12, the Norwegian troops began a more organized resistance. As practice has shown, "people's governments" were perceived too negatively in those countries on which they wanted to be imposed. The

landing of the Germans in Norway was successful, the English fleet on the way to Bergen came under attack from the Luftwaffe and was forced to withdraw. Due to the dominance of the German Air Force in the air, the naval superiority of England off the coast of southern Norway was neutralized, and on April 9-14, the Wehrmacht captured the main centers of the country. The Danish government agreed to surrender, and the occupation of the country took place almost without a shot being fired. On April 12-13, England occupied the Faroe Islands, and on April 12, the United States announced the extension of the Monroe Doctrine to Greenland. England refrained from occupying it, but occupied Iceland on May 10. Meanwhile, the Allies responded to the Norwegian call for help and allocated 8 brigades of the British, French and Polish armies for operations in Norway. On April 12, the first ships with a landing force left England, which was landed on April 14 in Solangen Harstad. Landed on April 17 in Ondalsnes, 2 British brigades were supposed to strike through Dombos to Trondheim, however, units were turned south from Dombos and on April 21-22 at Lake Myosa they collided with German troops and were driven back. The relatively planned retreat of the British gave way on April 25 to a disorderly flight. As reinforcements, the Allies landed the 15th brigade in Ondalsnes on April 23, which could only cover the retreat of the defeated units.

The 146th British brigade, which landed on April 17 in Namsos, advanced towards Trondheim until April 22, but the maneuvering actions of the enemy forced the British to retreat. The 5th French semi-brigade, which arrived in Namsos on April 19, did not correct the situation. Given the superiority of the enemy in the air, England was able, after a fierce debate on April 26-27, to convince France to begin evacuation from Central Norway. Having received the corresponding order on April 28, the Allied troops left Ondalsnes on April 30 - May 2, and Namsos on May 1-4. Southern and Central Norway were occupied by Germany. The Allies now decided to concentrate their efforts in northern Norway near Narvik, where new troops landed on 28 April and 6 May. On May 12, the Allies launched an attack on Narvik, which was taken only on May 28. With the start of the campaign in Western Europe and the failure of the Allies in France on 23 May, it was decided to evacuate Narvik. In early June, the Allies continued their offensive against the enemy, but after receiving an evacuation order on June 5, the French units left Narvik, and on June 7-8, the British. All of Norway was occupied by Germany. During the Norwegian operation, Germany lost 5,296 people killed and wounded, Norway - 2,500 people, the Allies - 3,761 people, the Luftwaffe lost 242 aircraft, and the Allied Air Force - 112. Losses at sea were more significant. The Anglo-French Navy lost 1 aircraft carrier, 1 cruiser, 1 air defense cruiser, 9 destroyers, 6 submarines, not counting smaller units, while Germany lost 3 cruisers, 10 destroyers, 4 submarines, an artillery training ship and 10 small craft. Having signed a peace treaty with Finland, according to which not only a new border was

established, but the parties assumed an obligation to refrain from attacking each other and not to participate in coalitions hostile to each other, the Soviet leadership closely followed the situation in Scandinavia. The idea of a Norwegian-Swedish-Finnish defensive alliance displeased Moscow, which on March 20 and 29 declared that this alliance was incompatible with the Soviet-Finnish treaty of March 12, 1940.



The USSR was also alarmed by the promises made by the British leadership on March 24 to revise the terms of the Soviet-Finnish treaty after the victory of the Allies. Therefore, the USSR initially perceived the German invasion of Norway as a lesser evil compared to the Anglo-French landing, which threatened Finnish revenge, but as events unfolded, Moscow's position became more and more cautious. On April 12 and 14, TASS denied rumors that "most of the German troops that captured Narvik arrived by rail through Leningrad and Murmansk"<sup>496</sup>, and on April 15, rumors that Germany was asking for permission to transfer troops to Norway through the territory of the USSR<sup>497</sup>. In May 1940, the USSR supported the idea put forward by Sweden to neutralize Northern Norway, but the evacuation of the Allied troops made this issue irrelevant.

During the fighting in Norway, Sweden, having received assurances from Germany that it would not become an object of hostilities if it did not violate its absolute neutrality, on April 11 mined its western territorial waters and on April 12 prohibited the ships of the warring countries from entering them. England and France tried to get Sweden to help Norway, but Stockholm evaded this step. On April 13, Sweden banned the transit and export of military materials through its territory to Norway, and Moscow asked Berlin not to violate Sweden's neutrality. In April - May 1940, Sweden was used for the transit of the wounded and internees from Norway to Germany and England. But in general, in matters of transit, Sweden took an uncompromising position and even shot down German aircraft that invaded its airspace. On April 21, the German and Swedish military agreed on the regime of the Norwegian-Swedish border, which contributed to the overall normalization of the situation. As Germany's successes increased, Sweden took a position of increasingly benevolent neutrality and on 18 June agreed to a German request for the transit of war materials, which led to the signing of an agreement on 8 July. England and Norway protested, which was rejected by Sweden. From September 1940, Germany increasingly increased its requirements for transit, and on December 5 a new expanded agreement was signed<sup>498</sup>.

The defeat of France and the occupation of Scandinavia changed the strategic situation in Europe. England found herself in a blockade and, to ease it, sought to create tension in Norway in order to divert the German Navy. Already in September 1940, England began to spread rumors about the preparation of a landing operation in Scandinavia. It is clear that Germany was strengthening its defenses, and on August 17 - September 25, 1940, the mountain infantry corps "Norway" was transferred to the North. In the spring of 1941, British and Norwegian troops occupied Jan Mayen Island. On April 9, 1941, the American-Greenland Agreement was signed on the defense of the island by American troops, which recognized Danish sovereignty over Greenland. On March 4 and April 4, 1941, the British landed sabotage groups on the Lofoten Islands, which gave rise to fears in Berlin that England was preparing a serious landing operation. In London, plans were really developed for landing in Stavanger and attacking Oslo, and by June 1, 1941, a landing plan was developed in Narvik with the forces of 3 infantry divisions and 1 tank brigade to put pressure on Sweden and divert the German Navy to the North. For the occupation of Norway, Germany used 3 army corps and 12 infantry divisions (about 150 thousand people), but the importance of Scandinavia in the naval war decreased due to the capture of French ports in the Bay of Biscay and the lack of

ships<sup>499</sup>. Germany sought to use the military and economic potential of Scandinavia by purchasing non-ferrous metals, electricity and food there. Expanding trade with Germany, Sweden tried to maintain its economic ties with England. On May 16, 1940, an additional Anglo-Swedish agreement was signed on the use of Swedish tonnage in the West. In early July, a Swedish-German trade agreement was signed, and in 1940 the supply of Swedish ore covered 84% of Germany's ore imports. The parties bought weapons from each other. On August 2, 1940, Sweden offered England and Germany mediation, but they refused. On December 14-16, 1940, a new

economic agreement with Germany for 1941. On February 7 and March 7, 1941, the German-Swedish and Anglo-Swedish agreements on ocean trade in Sweden were signed, thanks to which Sweden received 23% of imports and 14% of exports by the end of the year<sup>500</sup>.

Under the new conditions, the attention of the Soviet leadership in Scandinavia was mainly directed to Sweden and Finland, but the USSR did not interrupt relations with Denmark and Norway. On May 17, 1940, Denmark offered to expand economic ties with the USSR, which caused a favorable reaction from Moscow. On September 18, a Soviet-Danish agreement on trade and payments was signed, and on October 10, Denmark asked the USSR to take into account its economic interests in the Baltics. In March 1941, Moscow invited Copenhagen to submit a list of claims, a significant part of which was taken into account in the additional protocol signed on May 21, 1941 to the Soviet-Danish trade agreement. On July 2, 1940, the USSR expressed its readiness to maintain diplomatic relations with the Norwegian government in exile. At the same time, at the request of Germany, the Soviet embassy in Oslo was transformed from July 15 into a general consulate. In the future, official Soviet-Norwegian relations developed through Germany, with which on April 10, 1941, a Soviet-Norwegian agreement on trade and payments was signed. On May 8, 1941, the USSR terminated diplomatic relations with Norway<sup>501</sup>.

Sweden was also interested in expanding economic ties with the USSR. As a result of negotiations in the summer of 1940, regular air traffic was established on the Moscow-Stockholm line and the Leningrad-Stockholm-Stettin steamship line was opened. The Swedish side handed over to the USSR information about the minefields in the Stockholm skerries. At the same time, on June 15, TASS denied rumors that the USSR "promised to provide assistance to Sweden; on September 7, a Soviet-Swedish event of an attack on it"<sup>502</sup> trade and credit, according to which Sweden provided the USSR with a loan in the amount of 100 million crowns for 5 years at the rate of 4.5% per annum. Imports from the USSR to Sweden increased in 1940 by 2.5 times compared to 1939, and Soviet engineers got the opportunity to visit Swedish enterprises. On August 10, Sweden de facto recognized the accession of the Baltic States to the USSR, but insisted on satisfying its economic interests in the region. On October 11, the USSR offered Sweden compensation for the Baltic states, hinting that since Germany surrounded Sweden, it should be friends with Moscow. The negotiations that began in February 1941 in Moscow ended on May 30 with the signing of a Soviet-Swedish agreement on the settlement of property claims in relation to the Baltic states. In November 1940, Sweden requested permission to open consulates in Leningrad, Riga, and Vladivostok, but on April 11, 1941, this

request was rejected. On April 29, a Soviet-Finnish protocol was signed describing the new border, the demarcation of which was completed on October 16, 1940. On May 4, 1940, TASS denied rumors that the USSR offered Finland to exchange some territories for the Aland Islands and Petsamo, and on May 10 - rumors about Soviet-Finnish-Swedish negotiations on a mutual assistance treaty. During the development of the Soviet-Finnish trade agreement, the Soviet side on June 23 raised the question of obtaining a concession for nickel mines south of Petsamo or organizing a mixed Soviet-Finnish society for their development. Finland, which at that time was conducting economic negotiations with Germany, referred to the impossibility of terminating the concession of the Anglo-Canadian joint-stock company, but expressed its readiness to sell 50% of nickel production to the USSR, saying that Germany was also interested in its purchase. The Soviet-German competition on the issue of nickel mines gave Finland the opportunity to maneuver between Moscow and Berlin, and the Soviet-Finnish trade agreement and the German-Finnish trade agreement were signed respectively on June 28 and 29, 1940. On July 23, England brought to the attention of the USSR its consent to the acquisition by Moscow of a concession for these mines, but the Finnish leadership continued to refer to the uncompromising position of London on this issue and on July 27 concluded

agreement on the supply of 60% of nickel production to Germany, and on October 1, in exchange for arms supplies, Germany actually received a monopoly on Finnish exports<sup>504</sup>.

Another important issue for the USSR was the question of the status of the Åland Islands. Knowing about Finland's desire to arm them, on June 27, 1940, Moscow declared its readiness to take part in this process or, if the Finns refuse to militarize them, to be able to control the situation on the islands. Already on July 3, Finland declared its readiness to maintain a demilitarized zone on the Åland Islands, and the USSR proposed to organize a Soviet consulate there. The Soviet proposal to jointly strengthen the Åland Islands with Finland and Sweden was rejected. Further negotiations showed that Finland was not ready to cooperate with the USSR on this issue, and sought to internationalize this problem. Moscow, on the other hand, insisted on concluding an agreement not related to the 1921 convention, which was eventually signed on October 11, 1940, defining the boundaries of the demilitarized zone and the right of the USSR to control the regime of the islands through the Soviet consulate<sup>505</sup>. The creation of a Soviet naval base on Hangö required the settlement of the issue of overland transit of various military cargoes from the USSR. As a result of negotiations, on September 9, 1940, the Soviet-Finnish agreement on transit to Hangö was signed, and on September 25, the

transfer of Soviet troops began. On December 9, 1940, the deputy commander of the LVO, Lieutenant General Chibisov, in his report on the results of the trip to Hangö, assessed the strategic importance of the peninsula as follows: "Hangö with the islands adjacent to it, which had fallen to us under the agreement, armed with powerful coastal artillery, together with the fortified region of Tallinn covers Leningrad from the sea and closes the breakthrough of the enemy's naval forces into the Gulf of Finland. The Hangö area can simultaneously be used as a springboard for striking deep into Finland. The role of Hangö becomes even more significant when we own the Åland Islands, which allow us to lock the Gulf of Bothnia and serve as a springboard for striking not only to the east along the industrial region of Finland, but also to the west in terms of the situation. The great operational significance of the Hangö Peninsula as the Soviet Gibraltar requires its strong security against enemy invasion, both from land and from the sea"<sup>506</sup>.

For the defense of Hangö, the 8th separate rifle brigade was formed, transferred on December 1, 1940 from the KBF to the LVO. On January 1, 1941, the brigade consisted of 10,710 people, 428 machine guns, 189 grenade launchers, 166 guns and mortars, 49 tanks, 5 armored vehicles. Defending the peninsula, the brigade was supposed to prevent enemy troops from entering it and the adjacent islands, to prevent the possibility of landing a sudden sea and air assault, and to ensure the concentration and landing of suitable Soviet units in the port of Hangö<sup>507</sup>. In January 1941, Moscow, irritated by Finland's position on nickel, withdrew plenipotentiary from Helsinki and increased the number of troops on the Karelian Isthmus, and the headquarters of the LVO prepared a plan for a new operation against Finland, but until the summer of 1941 an agreement was not reached<sup>508</sup>.

The Scandinavian countries provided significant economic assistance to Finland, which, having lost 10% of its territory, was forced to resettle the 12% of the population that previously lived there. The war and post-war socio-economic difficulties contributed to the strengthening of authoritarian tendencies in the leadership of Finland. The occupation of Norway by Germany, which cut off Finland from direct ties with Britain and France, led to a revival in Helsinki of hopes for a rapprochement with Berlin, which were further strengthened after the surrender of France. For its part, Germany was interested in using Finland as a channel for supplying its troops in Northern Norway and a possible springboard for a war with the USSR. Knowing quite well about the revanchist sentiments of the Finnish leadership, Germany cautiously but persistently offered its services to Finland to protect it from the Soviet threat. In August 1940, German-Finnish negotiations were held on the transit of German troops through the territory of Finland and on the supply of German weapons to it. September 12 was signed

an agreement on a one-time transit of 5,500 military personnel, which was formalized on September 22 through an exchange of notes. On September 21, the first units of the Wehrmacht landed in Finland and began to advance into Norway. In September 1940, an agreement was reached between Berlin and Helsinki to coordinate the activities of the general staffs and intelligence services against the USSR. Finland increased military spending and modernized the army<sup>509</sup>.

Sweden and Finland were wary of the events in the Baltic states in June-August 1940, as well as the continuous reconnaissance of the Soviet-Finnish border by the LVO troops at the same time,<sup>510</sup> which stimulated the trend of their mutual rapprochement. In August 1940, the Swedish-Finnish naval maneuvers took place, during which the USSR was considered as a potential enemy. Since the autumn of 1940, Sweden has been developing action plans in case of a new war between the USSR and Finland, which provided for the transfer of 1-2 divisions to the northern regions of Finland. Both sides viewed Germany as a counterbalance to the USSR, while Finland pinned hopes of revenge on Germany. In the second half of 1940, at the suggestion of Germany, Sweden mined its territorial waters. In October 1940, Finland proposed to Sweden to discuss the issue of an alliance that would potentially be directed both against the USSR and against Germany. But in December, Moscow and Berlin reacted negatively to this idea, since Germany hoped to drag Sweden and Finland into the war one by one, and the USSR sought to have neutral and divided countries on its border. As the German-Finnish alliance strengthened, Finland ceased to be interested in an alliance with Sweden, and the consent of the USSR to this alliance, expressed in April 1941, could no longer interest Helsinki. On April 21, 1941, Sweden was in principle oriented about a possible war between Germany and the USSR, and part of the military advocated close cooperation with the Reich, but the government decided to wait. Already at the beginning of May 1941, Finland declared to Sweden that in the event of a German-Soviet war it would not remain neutral. It is clear that the penetration of Germany into Finland worried Moscow, so the Finnish question

became the subject of discussion at the negotiations in Berlin in November 1940. The Soviet leadership sought to ensure that Germany confirmed the assignment of Finland to the Soviet sphere of interests "on the basis of the Soviet-German agreement of 1939. , in the implementation of which Germany must eliminate all difficulties and ambiguities (the withdrawal of German troops, the cessation of all political demonstrations in Finland and Germany aimed at harming the interests of the USSR)"<sup>512</sup>. During the discussion of the Finnish question at the negotiations in Berlin, Germany, having confirmed last year's agreement and declaring its political disinterest in Finland, drew the attention of the USSR to the importance of Finnish timber and nickel exports for the German economy and the need to prevent a new conflict in the Baltic Sea. To prevent the Finnish question from interfering with a broader Soviet-German agreement, the Soviet side made the following compromise proposal on 25 November. German troops must be withdrawn from Finland, which is the sphere of interests of the USSR on the basis of the 1939 agreement, and the USSR undertakes to "ensure peaceful relations with Finland, as well as Germany's economic interests in Finland (export of timber and nickel)"<sup>513</sup>. But there was no response to this proposal.

Anti-Soviet and revanchist propaganda was carried out in Finland, and forced unanimity was maintained. The activities of the Society for Peace and Friendship with the USSR, founded on May 22, 1940, which by December united up to 40 thousand people, were persecuted in every possible way by the Finnish authorities, and in December it was banned. At the same time, Germany and Finland reached an agreement on joint actions in case of war with the USSR, and the Finnish Army General Staff began to work out specific military plans. Military contacts between Germany and Finland expanded in the first half of 1941, and during military negotiations on May 15-28 and June 3-6, Finland was informed about German

intentions towards the USSR, and the parties agreed on plans for military operations. On May 30, Stalin received the Finnish ambassador in Moscow and started talking about friendly Soviet-Finnish relations, which he intended to back up with the supply of 20 thousand tons of grain, but this could no longer change the position of Finland, where partial mobilization began on June 1. On June 17, Finland officially withdrew from the League of Nations, and on June 18 began general mobilization. On June 7, the concentration of German troops in Norway and Finland began to attack the USSR. On the evening of June 21, Finnish submarines, together with German submarines, began to mine Soviet territorial waters in the Gulf of Finland. On June 21, Finnish troops were put on full alert and in the morning occupied the demilitarized Åland Islands, and German troops occupied the Petsamo region<sup>514</sup>. Thus, in an effort to use the Soviet-German war to carry out its revanchist intentions, Finland joined Germany in its "Eastern campaign", although formally, in order not to spoil relations with England and the United States, the Finnish leadership did not sign any documents on cooperation with the Wehrmacht and actively promoted the idea of some kind of "parallel" war in the East, which they supposedly waged completely independently, and not in alliance with Germany<sup>515</sup>.

Scandinavia, traditionally considered a peripheral region of Europe, attracted the attention of the great powers with the outbreak of World War II due to its advantageous strategic position. Initially, the economic struggle for influence in Scandinavia unfolded between Germany and England, who quickly became convinced of the insufficiency of only peaceful means of influence on the Scandinavian countries and began to work out options for direct military intervention. For its part, the Soviet Union, having achieved Germany's recognition of its sphere of interest in Eastern Europe and satisfactorily solving the Polish and Baltic problems for itself, hoped to quickly increase its military presence in the Gulf of Finland and influence in Finland. However, the Finnish leadership, already prejudiced against the USSR and having received the moral support of other countries, took an uncompromising position. As a result, the Soviet-Finnish negotiations ended in failure, and the Soviet leadership faced the problem of "saving face." It was necessary either to recognize the impossibility of influencing Finland, which could negatively affect the behavior of the Baltic countries and make the USSR an object of ridicule in the world press, or to force the Finns to recognize the Soviet Union as a great power and accept Soviet proposals. It is clear that Finland's demonstrative intransigence and the campaign launched in the world press to support its position left Moscow no choice but war. In principle, both England and France and Germany were interested in the outbreak of

the Soviet-Finnish war to one degree or another. In London and Paris, the Soviet-Finnish crisis was seen as an opportunity to revive the Soviet-German contradictions, while in Berlin they hoped for a deterioration in Soviet-British and Soviet-French relations. At the same time, no one doubted that the USSR would quickly defeat Finland, but events took an unexpected turn and the war dragged on. This allowed England, France and Germany in December 1939 - March 1940 to develop plans in parallel to ensure their interests in Scandinavia by military means. However, the Scandinavian countries, frightened by the threat of being drawn into the war, took a position of defending their neutrality, which, especially after the end of the Soviet-Finnish war, put England and France in a difficult position, since they did not want to clearly violate international law. Therefore, the Allies made a bet on provoking Germany into action in Scandinavia, which would give them an excellent excuse for their own invasion. However, Berlin understood that the further use of neutrals in the interests of Germany was increasingly limited to England and France, and, using the hype in the Western press about the Allied military plans, they were the first to strike. By June 1940, Germany occupied Denmark and Norway, which gave her an excellent base for deploying naval operations, although the forces of the German fleet were not enough to fight the British fleet.

Left out of the big war, Sweden and Finland became the object of the military-political struggle between Germany and the Soviet Union. As a result, Stockholm and Helsinki, faced with a choice, preferred to focus on Berlin. True, if Sweden nevertheless tried to maintain the appearance of neutrality, then Finland relied on the support of Germany in an attempt to take revenge for the war of 1939-1940. The version that it was the Soviet-Finnish war that pushed Finland to cooperate with Germany does not take into account the fact that Finland's policy was anti-Soviet before, and Germany's occupation of Norway put Helsinki before a choice: an alliance with the USSR or with Germany. It is clear that the Finns would never have chosen Moscow! Therefore, the Soviet-Finnish war was only a convenient excuse for cooperation with Germany. Thus, the USSR failed to expand its influence in the Scandinavian countries, which were either occupied by Germany or took a pro-German position. Under these conditions, only the crushing of Germany would have opened the way for Moscow to dominate Europe.

### **The build-up of the Soviet military presence in the Baltics**

Problems of the history of the Baltic states 1939-1941. were traditionally considered in Russian historiography in line with the official position of the Soviet leadership, which is most fully enshrined in the historical reference "Falsifiers of History". In recent years, the official unanimity characteristic of previous decades has been replaced by the development of alternative views, which was facilitated by the expansion of the source base of research<sup>516</sup>. Issues of the political history of the Baltic states received considerable coverage in the literature, but most of the military-historical problems remained unexplored. The available archival materials make it possible to eliminate this gap and, relying on the achievements of the latest domestic historiography, to give a comprehensive assessment of the events in the Baltic states at the turn of the 1930s-1940s. During the interwar

twenty years, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were the objects of the struggle of the great powers of Europe for influence in the region. The Anglo-French influence in the Baltics, which was characteristic of the 1920s and early 1930s, was increasingly limited by the growing influence of Germany. Due to the strategic importance of the region, the Soviet leadership also sought to increase its influence there, using both diplomatic means and active social propaganda. By the end of the 30s. Germany and the Soviet Union turned out to be the main rivals in the struggle for influence in the Baltics. Being a buffer zone between Germany and the USSR, the Baltic states were connected with them by a system of economic agreements and non-aggression pacts of 1926, 1932 and 1939. The Soviet Union considered Estonia and Latvia as a sphere of its national interests, which was unequivocally stated in the notes dated March 28, 1939. The Soviet representatives defended the same position at negotiations with England and France in the spring and summer of 1939. During the discussion of issues of guarantees to the Baltic countries and "indirect aggression" the Soviet leadership was convinced that Britain and France would not agree to satisfy Soviet demands regarding the Baltic states. Not wanting to tie their hands, in the conditions of the refusal of France and England from such a concession, the Soviet leadership entered into negotiations with Germany, reaching an agreement with which made it possible to achieve an increase in Soviet influence in the

Baltic states. During the Soviet-German negotiations on August 23, 1939 in Moscow, the German proposal to divide the Baltic states into spheres of interest along the Daugava River ran into a tough Soviet demand to recognize all of Latvia as a zone of Soviet interests. The German leadership, too interested in neutralizing the USSR in the upcoming war with Poland, was forced to satisfy Soviet claims in the Baltics. In the secret additional protocol to the Soviet-German non-aggression pact, it was written: "In the event of a territorial and political rearrangement of the regions that are part of the Baltic states (Finland, Estonia, Latvia and

Lithuania), the northern border of Lithuania is at the same time the border of German spheres of interest and the USSR. At the same time, the interests of Lithuania in relation to the Vilna region are recognized by both parties"<sup>517</sup>. Thus, the USSR achieved recognition of its predominant influence in Estonia and Latvia, although, of course, this agreement could be implemented only in certain conditions. On

September 1, 1939, Germany attacked Poland; on September 3, England and France declared war in Germany, and on September 17 the Red Army crossed the Soviet-Polish border. In a note handed on the same day to the states that were in diplomatic relations with the USSR, including the Baltic ones, it was emphasized that "in relations with them, the USSR will pursue a policy of neutrality "<sup>518</sup>. After the defeat and division of Poland between Germany and the USSR, the Soviet borders moved to the West, the Soviet-Lithuanian border was created and the impossibility of Anglo-French intervention was demonstrated in the affairs of Eastern Europe. The military-political situation of the Baltic States has changed, which prompted Germany and the USSR to start implementing their agreements. September 20 1939 in Berlin, a draft treaty was drawn up with Lithuania, turning it into a German protectorate, but the German-Lithuanian negotiations never took place. September 25 A. Hitler signed Directive No. 4, according to which it was necessary to "keep in East Prussia ready forces sufficient to quickly capture Lithuania, even in the event of her armed resistance"<sup>519</sup>. On the same day, during the beginning of the Soviet-German contacts on the settlement of the Polish problem, the USSR offered to exchange territory of the Warsaw and Lublin voivodships to Lithuania and announced his desire to deal with the decision problems of the Baltics<sup>520</sup>.

The latest Russian historiography is characterized by a discussion about the conclusion mutual assistance treaties between the USSR and the Baltic countries. Supporters official version continued to assert that with the outbreak of World War II in these countries, the class struggle intensified, the threat of their capture by Germany increased, and consequently, they had no choice but to conclude agreements on mutual assistance with the USSR, to which their governments agreed under pressure from the population<sup>521</sup>. As a rule, any connection of these agreements with the Soviet-German an agreement on the division of spheres of interest in Eastern Europe<sup>522</sup>. Only A.S. Orlov notes that under the agreement of September 28, 1939, the USSR received a free hand in relation to the Baltic States and, in order to create a foreground, to secure oneself from the invasion of Germany and to detain the Wehrmacht away from its borders, concluded with the Baltic states mutual assistance agreements. The contracts themselves are assessed as quite legal (what is means, it seems, is not clear to the authors themselves) and beneficial to both parties<sup>524</sup>. But there is more critical assessments, according to which the Soviet-German agreements predetermined the fate of the Baltic countries and put an end to their independence; negotiation were carried out by the Soviet side from a position of strength under the threat of a military invasion, which led to signing agreements on mutual assistance. To answer Whose point of view is the most convincing? this question, let's take a closer look at the course of events.

In the Baltics, the outbreak of war in Europe heightened fears of being drawn into events and prompted the enactment of laws of neutrality. At the same time, these countries became consider the possibility of economic rapprochement with the USSR, proposing, with its own parties, negotiations on the expansion of trade, which was positively assessed Moscow. The rumors about the Soviet-German division of the Baltic states caused concern of the leadership of these countries, which asked for clarification from diplomatic missions of Germany and the USSR. The diplomats of both countries made a number of general statements, more or less confidently denying the existence of such an agreement. IN in particular, the Soviet plenipotentiaries referred "to the speeches of the leadership and the press of the Soviet Union, on the peaceful traditions of our foreign policy, on the constant striving of the Soviet Union to help small countries maintain their independent and existence"<sup>526</sup>. Contradictory moods were observed in the Baltic countries:

part of the ruling and wealthy circles agreed to continue rapprochement with Germany, a significant part of the population adhered to an anti-German orientation and saw a real opportunity to maintain national existence based on the USSR, and part of the left circles did not rule out the possibility of joining the Soviet Union.

While the Soviet-Estonian economic negotiations were going on September 13-21, the Soviet leadership was carefully preparing to solve political problems. The flight of an interned Polish submarine on September 18 from Tallinn caused discontent in Moscow, which feared its actions against Soviet shipping. September 19 V.M. Molotov told the Estonian envoy that the USSR blamed this incident on Estonia and the Soviet Red Banner Baltic Fleet (KBF) would search for this boat throughout the Gulf of Finland. Thus, a naval blockade was established, accompanied by the invasion of Soviet ships into the territorial waters of Estonia and the shelling of its coast. On September 24, the Estonian Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Selter left for Moscow to sign a trade agreement, where at 21 o'clock his negotiations with Molotov began. From the discussion of economic problems, Molotov moved on to the problems of mutual security and proposed "to conclude a military alliance or an agreement on mutual assistance, which at the same time would provide the Soviet Union with the right to have strongholds or bases for the fleet and aviation on the territory of Estonia." Selter tried to evade discussion of the treaty, referring to neutrality, but Molotov said that "the Soviet Union needs to expand its security system, for which it needs access to the Baltic Sea. If you do not wish to conclude a mutual assistance pact with us, then we will have to look for There are other ways to guarantee our security, maybe steeper, maybe more difficult. Please don't force us to use force against Estonia." In response to Selter's remark that German discontent was possible and that the government and parliament should be

informed, Molotov stated that "this matter is urgent. I advise you to meet the wishes of the Soviet Union in order to avoid the worst. Do not force the Soviet Union to use force in order to achieve your goals. Considering our proposals, do not pin your hopes on England and Germany. England is not in a position to do anything in the Baltic Sea, and Germany is bound by war in the West. Now all hopes for external help would be illusions. So you can be We are sure that the Soviet Union will ensure its security one way or another. After a break, the Estonian delegation was presented with a draft treaty of mutual assistance, while the signing of the trade treaty was postponed until Selter's next visit to Moscow with a response to the Soviet proposal. Returning to Tallinn on September 25, Selter informed the German envoy about the Soviet proposals and tried to get the support of Finland and Latvia, who decided not to interfere, and Germany advised to satisfy the Soviet demands<sup>527</sup>. Meanwhile, a Soviet military group was being created on the border between Estonia and Latvia. As early as August 13, 1939, in the Leningrad Military District (LVO), by order of the People's Commissar of Defense, Marshal of the Soviet Union

K.E. Voroshilov No. 0129, the Novgorod Army Group was formed, which on September 14 was transformed into the 8th Army, the command of which was stationed in Pskov. In the Kalinin Military District (KalVO), the 7th Army was deployed for mobilization, which, according to the directives of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 16664 and 16668 of September 14, was transferred from September 15 to the operational subordination of the Military Council of the LVO. By Directive No. 16669 of September 14, the People's Commissar of Defense determined the composition of the troops covering the territory of the LVO in Kingisepp (11th Rifle Division, 447th Corps Artillery Regiment) and Pskov (Department of the 1st Rifle Corps, 49th, 56th and 75th rifle divisions) directions. According to the directive of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 030 of September 25, the troops of the 7th Army began to concentrate on the Latvian border, and the army headquarters was relocated to Idritsa. On September 25, reconnaissance flights of Soviet aircraft over Estonia began. On September 26, the directive of the People's Commissar No. 043 / op was received at the headquarters of the LVO, according to which it was required "to immediately begin



the concentration of forces on the Estonian-Latvian border and end this on September 29, 1939." army, which included part of the troops of the 3rd Army of the Belorussian Front, concentrated on the left bank of the Western Dvina on September 26-29. The troops were tasked with "delivering a powerful and decisive blow to the Estonian troops, for which: a) the Kingisepp group to attack quickly to Wesenburg, Tape, Tallinn; b) the 8th Army to defeat the enemy troops and advance on Yuryev

[Tartu] and in the future - together with the Kingisepp group on Tallinn, Pernov [Pärnu], allocating one tank brigade and the 25th cavalry division in the direction of Valk to ensure its flank. In the event of the appearance of the Latvian military units to help the Estonian army, [advance] in the direction from Valka to Riga; c) 7th Army - to cover the operations of the LVO from the side of the Latvian border. In the event of a speech or assistance from the Latvian army to the Estonian units, the 7th Army will attack with a quick and decisive blow on both banks of the Dvina River in the general direction of Riga. assist the offensive of the ground forces of the LVO. "The People's Commissar of Defense demanded that an operation plan be prepared by September 27 and warned that "a special directive will be given about the time of going over to the offensive." Commencement of the operation on my special instructions. To continue urgently the concentration of troops, the supply of fuel, ammunition and the organization of communications and command and control of troops. When assigning tasks to units, avoid destroying railway bridges. The task of the Baltic Fleet is not to destroy the enemy fleet, but to capture it, taking measures to prevent it from leaving for the neutral waters of Finland or Sweden.

On the same day, the commander of the LVO gave the appropriate orders to the troops. By order No. 4413, a separate Kingisepp rifle corps was ordered to complete the concentration on the border by the morning of September 29. "After receiving a special order, the corps goes on the offensive with the task, in cooperation with the Red Banner Baltic Fleet, to capture the crossings across the Narova River, destroying the Narva group of the enemy, to capture Wesenburg, with the ultimate task of occupying Tallinn." The 8th Army received the task of defeating the enemy's Izborsk-Pechersk group and, advancing on Yuryev, together with the Kingisepp Rifle Corps, capture Tallinn and Pernov. By the morning of September 29, the Red Banner Baltic Fleet was ordered to be in full combat readiness in order to, having received an order, strike at the naval bases of Estonia, capture its fleet, preventing it from leaving for the neutral waters of Finland and Sweden, and support ground forces on the coast with artillery fire and keep in mind the landing of 4,000 troops on special orders. In the event of an action by Latvia, its fleet

should have been seized as well<sup>529</sup>. At 1.00 on September 29, the commander of the LVO ordered the 7th Army: "The concentration of troops ... to the Latvian border on the front of Krasny, Sebez, Lake Osveiskoye, Pridruisk, be completed by the end of September 29, having them in full combat readiness ... Task 7th army to cover the operations of the LVO against Estonia from the Latvian border. In the event of a speech or assistance from the Latvian army to the Estonian units, the 7th Army, by special order, with a quick and decisive blow on both banks of the river Z. Dvina, advance in the general direction to Riga. " On the right, the troops of the 8th Army are operating, whose left flank "in the direction of Valk is provided by the 1st brigade and the 25th KD, reinforced by two joint ventures in vehicles, which, in the event of action or assistance from the Latvian military units of the Estonian army, act in the direction of Riga. [ ...] A special directive will be given about the time of going over to the offensive ... All preparation and occupation of the initial position should

be carried

out covertly, in the initial position the troops must be disguised"<sup>530</sup>. Table 12 Soviet grouping for Sep

\* Included in the army from 12.00 October 6. Table

13 Number

and armament of troops on September 28 - October 6, 1939 225 759 87 7  
538 3rd A 193 859 1 378 1 078 197 9 011 Total \* 437 235 3 635 3 052 421  
21 919 \* The total is derived

without taking into account the double  
count of the troops of the 4th SC. For  
its part, the Estonian army also carried  
out a number of measures in case of war,

having completed by September 27 all pre-mobilization preparations. Caught in front dilemma: treaty or war, the Estonian leadership eventually made a choice in favor of agreement, and on September 27 the Estonian delegation again flew to Moscow. On the same day in the Izvestia newspaper received official information about the Soviet-Estonian negotiations, and Soviet radio reported sinking in the Gulf of Finland by an unknown submarine Soviet ship "Metallist". During the negotiations that began at 20.30 on September 27, Molotov, referring to the sinking of Metallist, he put forward a demand "during the current war in Europe to keep a 35,000-strong garrison of Soviet troops in different places in Estonia. The Estonian delegation refused, and then Stalin took part in the negotiations, who called the figure of 25 thousand people the minimum necessary, using as an argument the following consideration: "There should not be too few troops - surround and destroy." IN Selter, who defended the 15,000 figure, said: "It's insulting. We we conclude an alliance treaty, and you talk as if we are the worst enemies who all the time should be wary of each other's attacks."

Development of a treaty and disputes over the locations of the Soviet fleet in Estonia continued the next day, and late in the evening of September 28, the Mutual Assistance Treaty for a period of 10 years, which provided for the introduction of 25 thousand contingents of Soviet troops, was agreed and signed. After the exchange of instruments of ratification on October 4, 1939, he It entered into force. At the same time, an agreement was signed on trade turnover between the USSR and Estonia for the period from October 1, 1939 to December 31, 1940. Stalin good-naturedly "congratulated" Selter: "I can tell you that the Estonian government acted wisely and for the benefit of the Estonian people by concluding an agreement with the Soviet Union. with you could turn out like with Poland "532

It is interesting to note that information about the Soviet military pressure on Estonia was already known at that time. So, the teacher of the Military Medical School battalion Commissioner G.M. Ikonnikov, lecturing at the beginning of 1940 to students of the 5th year of the Leningrad Road Institute, described these events as follows: "To Estonia with our the parties were put under military pressure with the provision of a several-hour ultimatum that if he does not accept the proposal of the Soviet government, then after the expiration of the established term, our Red Army occupies Estonian territory. After such an ultimatum Estonian Foreign Minister Selter flew to Moscow by plane to sign pact. The entry of our Red Army units into the Baltic states is similar to this for example, how to let a friend into your apartment, who first occupied one room, then will seize the entire apartment and out of it the owner himself. "For such information Ikonnikov was expelled from the members of the CPSU (b) on March 24, 1940, and the Special department of the GUGB

NKVD533. It is curious that this assessment of the future consequences of the entry of the Red Army into the Baltic did not strongly disagree with the now known opinion of Stalin, expressed on October 25, 1939. Secretary of the ECCI G. Dimitrov: "We think that in the mutual assistance pacts (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) have found the form that will allow us to put into the orbit of influence Soviet Union a number of countries. But for this we need to endure - strictly observe them

internal regime and independence. We will not seek their Sovietization. The time will come when they will do it themselves!"<sup>534</sup>

Meanwhile, in Moscow on September 27 at 22.00, negotiations began with Germany, which also touched upon the Baltic problems. German Foreign Minister I. Ribbentrop, knowing from the German envoy in Tallinn about the Soviet proposals to Estonia and believing that "this, obviously, should be understood as the first step for the implementation of the Baltic issue," asked the Soviet government to inform "how and when it is going to solve the whole range of these issues. After listening to Stalin's statement about the USSR's intention to establish military bases in Estonia "under the guise of a mutual assistance treaty", Ribbentrop asked "whether the Soviet government thereby intends to carry out a slow penetration into Estonia, and possibly into Latvia," Stalin replied in the affirmative, adding that, however, the present governmental system in Estonia, ministries, etc., will be temporarily abandoned. As regards Latvia, Stalin declared that the Soviet government intended to make similar proposals to it. If Latvia opposed the proposal of a mutual assistance pact on the same terms as Estonia, then the Soviet Army will "crack down" on Latvia as soon as possible. As for Lithuania, Stalin declared that the Soviet Union would include Lithuania in its composition if an appropriate agreement was reached with Germany on the "exchange" of territory. Assessing the position of the Baltic countries, Stalin believed that "no escapades are foreseen from their side at the present time, because they are all pretty scared." As a result of the negotiations, the Polish and Lithuanian problems were resolved on the basis of mutual concessions by the parties, and in accordance with the Soviet-German Treaty of Friendship and Border signed on September 28 and the secret additional protocol, Lithuania was transferred to the sphere of interests of the USSR<sup>535</sup>

The Latvian leadership, interested in expanding economic relations with the USSR, carefully studied the Estonian experience and, given the growth of Soviet influence in Eastern Europe, agreed to agree on terms similar to Estonian ones. On October 2, the Latvian Telegraph Agency reported that "Latvia is ready to start reviewing its foreign relations, primarily with the USSR. The government has instructed Foreign Minister Munters to immediately go to Moscow to enter into direct contact with the USSR government." On the same day, at 21.30, the first conversation between V. Munters and the Soviet leadership began in the Kremlin, on whose behalf Molotov proposed to streamline Soviet-Latvian relations, since "we need bases near the ice-free sea." He was supported by Stalin, who declared that "if we reach an agreement, then there are very good prerequisites for trade and economic affairs." Justifying the position of the USSR, Molotov pointed out that "what was decided in 1920 cannot remain forever. Peter the Great also took care of access to the sea. which we can no longer stay in. Therefore, we want to guarantee ourselves the use of ports, the paths to these ports and their protection." Munters' attempts to dismiss Soviet claims provoked Stalin's rather frank remark: "I'll tell you straight: the division of spheres of influence has taken place ... if not us, then the Germans can occupy you. But we do not want to abuse ... We need Liepaja and Ventspils ..." <sup>536</sup>

The development of the terms of the agreement took place under persistent pressure from the Soviet side and slow concessions from the Latvian delegation. In the meantime, on October 1, the Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, by his order No. 074, amended the directive of the People's Commissar No. 043 / op, ordering to regroup the bulk of the troops of the 8th Army south of the Kudeb River to the border with Latvia. On the same day, by order of the People's Commissar of Defense, aerial reconnaissance of the Latvian territory was carried out. As a result of the negotiations, on October 5, a mutual assistance agreement was signed for a period of 10 years, which provided for the entry of a 25,000-strong contingent of Soviet troops into Latvia. The treaty entered into force on 14 October after the exchange of instruments of ratification. On October 18, a Soviet-Latvian trade agreement was signed for the period from November 1, 1939 to December 31, 1940.<sup>537</sup>

As soon as the USSR and Germany agreed on the transfer of Lithuania to the sphere of Soviet interests, on September 29, Molotov summoned her envoy to Moscow, L. Natkevichus, and told him that direct negotiations should begin on Lithuania's foreign policy orientation. Already on October 1, the Lithuanian government agreed to delegate Foreign Minister J. Urbšhis to Moscow. At the talks that began at 10 p.m. on October 3, Stalin informed the Lithuanian delegation about the Soviet-German agreement regarding the partition of Lithuania. Urbšhis' protest was muted by the desire to get Vilnius, which the Soviet side offered as bait in exchange for a mutual assistance treaty. The delegation was given Soviet draft documents, and on October 4 it returned to Kaunas. The Lithuanian government decided to refuse the deployment of Soviet troops, but expressed its readiness to have close cooperation with Moscow in the military field. At the new negotiations, it turned out that the USSR insisted on the deployment of troops, hinting that otherwise Vilnius could be transferred to the Byelorussian SSR<sup>538</sup>.

As an additional argument, the 3rd Army of the Belorussian Front was deployed on the borders of Lithuania. The question arose before the Lithuanian government: to sign the agreement demanded by the USSR with the deployment of garrisons and get Vilnius and the Vilna region, or not to sign the agreement, not get Vilnius and enter into conflict with the USSR. Convinced of Germany's non-intervention, the Lithuanian leadership decided to accept the Soviet proposal, and on October 10, the "Treaty on the transfer of the city of Vilna and the Vilna region to the Republic of Lithuania and on mutual assistance between the Soviet Union and Lithuania" was signed for a period of 15 years, providing for the introduction of a 20,000-strong contingent of Soviet troops. On October 15, a Soviet-Lithuanian trade agreement was

signed for the period from November 1, 1939 to December 31, 1940.<sup>539</sup> act in relation to the Baltics. The Soviet Union began to exercise its rights to a sphere of interests by concluding mutual assistance treaties, using the traditional practice of military-political pressure and promises, depending on the specific situation in relation to each Baltic country. Deprived of the support of the great powers of Europe, the Baltic countries found themselves face to face with the demands of the Soviet leadership. Therefore, it is difficult to disagree with the opinion of S.V. Volkova and E.V. Yemelyanov, who believe that "of course, these treaties would not have been signed by the governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania if they did not know that Germany had abandoned its hegemony in the Baltics." However, the authors' opinion that "in the real situation of 1939, another alternative to the agreements concluded in Moscow from September 28 to October 10 could only be the occupation of the Baltic republics by German troops"<sup>540</sup> seems far-fetched and contradicts real facts. As we have seen, the real alternative to these treaties could be the occupation of the Baltic states by the Red Army, and it was this threat that forced the governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to sign mutual assistance treaties, which they regarded as the lesser of evils. On October 10, 1939, the Soviet-German agreement on the Baltic was confirmed by the relevant agreements. Under these conditions, the leading circles of the Baltic states tried not to aggravate relations with the USSR, hoping in the future to get rid of the burdensome Soviet guardianship. Now Moscow had to exercise the acquired right to send troops to the Baltic states. On the basis of the directive of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 071 of September 30, a military

commission was formed under the chairmanship of the commander of the troops of the LVO, commander of the 2nd rank K.A. Meretskov, the purpose of which was "together with representatives of the Government of Estonia to establish accommodation points and discuss the issues of organizing units of the Red Army." The directive established the approximate areas for the deployment of troops and the terms of the commission's work. The talks between the military delegations of the parties ended on October 11 with the signing of agreements on the deployment of troops and the basing of the fleet in the areas of Paldiski, Haapsalu, on the islands of Ezel and

Dago. Soviet troops were stationed in Haapsalu for the duration of the war in Europe, but not more than for 2 years, and the Red Banner Baltic Fleet received the right to be based in Rohuküla and Tallinn for the period of building bases for 2 years. The procedure for supplying and visiting ships of third countries to the areas where the fleet was based was agreed upon, and the sovereignty of Estonia was fully preserved, but the interests of the Soviet fleet were also taken into account. In accordance with these agreements, at 8 am on October 18, 1939, the Red Army began to enter Estonia. Parts of the 65th Special Rifle Corps (OSK) and the Special Group of the Air Force were brought into Estonia, with a total number of 21,347 people, 283 tanks, 54 armored vehicles and 255 aircraft<sup>54</sup>

The implementation of the agreement with Latvia began in a similar manner. In this case, Commander V.I., commander of the KalVO troops, was appointed chairman of the Red Army commission. Boldin. By October 23, the military commissions of the parties developed a number of agreements on the deployment of Soviet troops, the bases of which were Liepaja, Ventspils, Priekule and Pitragi. The entry of naval forces was to begin on October 23, and ground forces in the Ventspils-Pitragi region on October 29, and in the Liepaja region on October 30. On October 23, the cruiser "Kirov" arrived in Liepaja, accompanied by the destroyers "Sharp-witted" and "Swift". At 11 am on October 29, the first echelon of Soviet troops arrived at the Zilupe station. According to the agreement, units of the 2nd OSK and the 18th air brigade arrived in Latvia, in which there were 21,559 people<sup>542</sup> According to the directive of the People's

Commissar of Defense No. .P. Kovalev. The Soviet delegation intended to negotiate the deployment of troops in Vilnius, Kaunas, Siauliai, Ukmerge and Alytus, but the Lithuanian side categorically refused to discuss such a deployment of Soviet troops, offering to place garrisons closer to the German border. Negotiations with Lithuania ended on October 28 with the signing of an agreement on the deployment of Soviet troops in the areas of Novaya Vileyka, Alytus, Prienai, Gayzhuny. The Air Force was to be located in Alytus and Gayzhuny and, in addition, receive a number of operational airfields. The troops stationed in Novaya Vileyka and Porubanka were considered to have already entered, and the rest were to be introduced on November 3rd. But the ceremony of bringing in troops took place only at 10 o'clock on November 15 and was purely symbolic, since the Soviet troops were already in Vilnius, i.e. on the territory of Lithuania. On November 15-17, most of the troops were withdrawn from Vilnius to their places of permanent deployment. Parts of the 16th OSK, the 10th fighter and the 31st medium bomber separate air regiments, with a total number of 18,786 people, were stationed in Lithuania. The Soviet troops finally left Vilnius on December 15, 1939.<sup>543</sup> According to the order of the People's Commissar for Defense No. Loktionova<sup>544</sup>

The conclusion of treaties with the USSR and the entry of Red Army units into the Baltic states gave rise to radical "Soviet" sentiments among some sections of the local population, which, to a certain extent, resonated with Soviet diplomats in Tallinn, Riga and Kaunas. The Soviet leadership, as already mentioned, trying with all its might to avoid an undesirable impression from the treaties, reacted quite quickly and harshly. On October 14, 1939, Molotov pointed out N.G. Pozdnyakov: "Stop all flirting and communication with leftist circles." On October 21, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs once again reminded that "the slightest attempt by any of you to interfere in the internal affairs of Lithuania will entail the strictest punishment for the culprit ... The chatter about the "Sovietization" of Lithuania should be discarded as provocative and harmful." On October 20, Moscow was dissatisfied with TASS correspondence from Tallinn, and Plenipotentiary K.N. Nikitin was instructed to give a firm rebuff to any action that could be interpreted as an intention to "Sovietize" Estonia. On October 23, Molotov ordered Nikitin to "stop all talk about the "Sovietization" of Estonia, as beneficial and pleasing at the moment only to provocateurs and enemies of the USSR" and not to interfere in the internal affairs of Estonia<sup>545</sup>

On October 25, the command of the 65th, 2nd and 16th special rifle corps received orders from the People's Commissar of Defense No. 0162, 0163, 0164, respectively, according to which the troops had no right to interfere in the internal affairs of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and talk about "Sovietization", if they were to take place among the military, must be rooted out and henceforth suppressed in the most merciless way, because they only play into the hands of the enemies of the Soviet Union"

and the Baltic countries. Speaking on October 31 at a session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Molotov declared that "the special nature of the indicated pacts of mutual assistance by no means means any interference of the Soviet Union in the affairs of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, as some organs of the foreign press are trying to portray. On the contrary, all these pacts Mutual Assistance Pacts firmly stipulate the inviolability of the sovereignty of the signatory states and the principle of non-interference in the affairs of another state. These pacts proceed from mutual respect for the state, social and economic structure of the other side and should strengthen the basis of peaceful, good-neighborly cooperation between our peoples. We stand for honest and punctual conduct in life of the concluded pacts on conditions of complete reciprocity and declare that the chatter about the "Sovietization" of the Baltic countries is beneficial only to our common enemies and all sorts of anti-Soviet provocateurs"<sup>547</sup>. As a result, the initial fears of a part of the public of the Baltic states regarding the

intentions of the USSR gradually receded into the background. As rightly noted by A.G. Dongarov and G.N. Peskov, the policy of complete non-interference of the USSR in the internal affairs of the Baltic countries was explained by the unwillingness to aggravate relations with England and France and the vagueness of the prospects for a war in Europe<sup>548</sup>. Strictly adhering to its line of complete non-interference in the internal affairs of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the Soviet leadership closely followed the situation in Europe and the Baltic states. As the mutual assistance treaties were implemented, the parties faced more and more new problems, to solve which, from November 1939 to May 1940, negotiations at various levels were repeatedly held and agreements were concluded specifying individual parties to the pacts. They regulated the issues of rent, rail transportation, the organization of construction, communications, sanitary provision and the legal status of military personnel, military agencies, the procedure for the entry and exit of command personnel and their families, etc. To control the implementation of the terms of the pacts and resolve disputes, mixed commissions were created. Gradually, Soviet troops settled down in the Baltic garrisons<sup>549</sup>.

In historiography, the question of the implementation of treaties is controversial. Most authors note that, despite certain frictions, the parties generally complied with the terms of the agreements<sup>550</sup>. At the same time, relations between the parties were far from idyllic. Soviet representatives on the ground unanimously noted that on the part of the Baltic countries it was more about the formal implementation of agreements and the desire to cash in on the supply of necessary goods and services to the Soviet troops. The authorities of the Baltic countries sought to minimize the contacts of Soviet military personnel with the local population. The threat of British and French intervention in the Soviet-Finnish war fueled sentiments in the ruling circles of the Baltic countries aimed at liberation from the treaties imposed by the USSR. According to A.S. Orlova, S.V. Volkov and Yu.V. Yemelyanov, although the deployed troops did not openly interfere in the internal affairs of these states, by the very fact of their presence they exerted a certain influence on the internal political situation, giving impetus to the fight against pro-fascist

regimes<sup>551</sup>. Explaining the actions of the USSR in relation to the Baltic countries in the summer of 1940, some authors point to the intensification of anti-Soviet actions by the governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which consisted in sending volunteers to Finland, creating a secret military alliance - the Baltic Entente, publishing the *Revue Baltique* magazine, tightening negotiations on the deployment of troops, maintaining ties and preparing an alliance with Germany, which in the first half of 1940 accounted for up to 70% of their agricultural e

kidnapping of Soviet soldiers in Lithuania, arrests of personnel serving the Soviet garrison. This reproduces the full set of Soviet accusations of 1940 against these countries. A.S. Orlov writes about the concentration of the Wehrmacht near the borders of Lithuania on June 16-17, 1940, and according to a number of authors, pro-fascist coups were being prepared in the Baltic States on June 15. Naturally, such "actions of the Baltic countries were violations of mutual assistance treaties," and this, according to I.N. Venkov, led to the fact that on June 16, 1940, the Soviet leadership suggested that the Baltic countries strictly observe the agreements and insisted on the introduction of an additional contingent of troops, to which, under pressure from the local population, their consent was obtained. True, S.V. Volkov and Yu.V. Yemelyanov note that these actions of the USSR are illegal, although they were dictated by his concern for his own security<sup>552</sup>. The documents now available allow us to take a critical look at the above versions and show how events actually developed.

Over the past decades, the existence of an anti-Soviet military alliance of the Baltic countries and its identity with the Baltic Entente has not been proven. An agreement on cooperation between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania - the Baltic Entente - was signed on September 12, 1934, causing the condemnation of Germany and the approval of the USSR. Cooperation obligations did not apply to Polish-Lithuanian relations, respectively Lithuania remained outside the Estonian-Latvian military alliance. In September 1939, Stalin informed the Estonian delegation that "we are not against it. This treaty can remain." The holding of the X (December 7-8, 1939) and XI (March 14-16, 1940) conferences of the Baltic Entente aroused the cautious attitude of Soviet diplomats, who noted with displeasure the independence of the Baltic governments and expressed the hope that they "should come to the conclusion of consolidating their foreign policy with its fourth powerful partner - the USSR - and to discuss foreign policy problems in the future jointly"<sup>553</sup>. The XI Conference gave rise to rumors about Lithuania joining the Estonian-Latvian military alliance, which, according to Soviet diplomats, was directed against the USSR. These data were verified by the Soviet plenipotentiary in Lithuania, who informed Moscow on April 2 that "the rumors about Lithuania's joining the military alliance have not yet been confirmed." True, on April 23, when announcing the appointment of an Estonian military attache to Lithuania, he noted that "this zigzag clearly indicates that Lithuania has some obligations in relation to Latvia and Estonia"<sup>554</sup>.

On June 2, the responsible head of TASS, Y. Khavinson, sent a letter to Molotov, in which he proposed "to pay the most serious attention to the activities of the so-called Baltic Entente," oriented towards England and France. The author of the letter, referring to rumors, accused Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania of creating a tripartite military alliance, of striving for economic and state unification. "For what other purposes, except for the purposes of anti-Soviet fuss, does the Baltic Entente exist at the present time?" [...] "There can be no doubt that the Baltic Entente is a legal form of Anglo-French influence in the Baltics, that even at the present time the Baltic Entente is engaged in behind-the-scenes anti-Soviet fuss. It is possible that, given the changes that have taken place in the international situation, the Baltic Entente may try (if not already trying) to "reorient" towards Germany. Noting the presence of a special journal "Revue Baltique" and the position of the Baltic press disloyal to the USSR, Khavinson posed the question: "Isn't the time ripe for us to take real measures to liquidate the Baltic Entente?" This letter is interesting in that many of its provisions were later used in the statements of the Soviet government and in propaganda<sup>555</sup>.

Thus, as M.I. Semiryaga, A.G. Dongarov and N.G. Peskov, researchers still do not have specific facts about the anti-Soviet activities of the Baltic Entente. The assessments of the Soviet side were based only on the assumptions of the Soviet diplomatic workers in the Baltics. At the same time, it should be noted that the Soviet leadership did not need any exact data, since

favorable conditions for eliminating the independence of the Baltic governments. If during the "strange war" the independent Baltic States fully corresponded to Soviet intentions, then Germany's victories in the West made it possible to finally solve the Baltic problem. To interfere in the internal affairs of the Baltic countries, pretexts were needed, which were used as the fate of the Red Army soldiers and the question of the Baltic Entente<sup>556</sup> On the other hand, the

Soviet leadership's assessment of the mood of the ruling circles of the Baltics was generally correct. Dissatisfied with the treaties imposed on the USSR, they staked on England and France, hoping to free themselves from Soviet tutelage after the war. In the conditions of the defeat of France and the weakening of England's influence in Europe, the leadership of the Baltic states, given the likelihood of a Soviet-German war, began to incline towards expanding secret contacts with Germany. As R. Misiunas and R. Taagepera rightly point out, "The Soviets obviously understood that in the event of any military conflict they could not rely on the Baltic states as their allies"<sup>557</sup> For its part, the Soviet leadership, preparing for a war with Germany, sought finally gain a foothold in a strategically advantageous region on the border of East Prussia, eliminate the slightest possibility of anti-Soviet actions by the Baltic countries, and at the same time expand the zone of "socialism", having "liberated" the working people of the Baltic states from capitalist oppression. Thus, the general situation in Europe and the own goals of the Soviet leadership dictated the need to join the Baltic States to the USSR.

Soviet representatives in the Baltic noted the facts of military cooperation between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, considering them as evidence of some activity hidden from the USSR. In particular, in November 1939 - May 1940 mutual visits of representatives of the high command of the armed forces of the Baltic countries took place. At the same time, as V.Ya. Sipols, there is no reliable data on the nature of their military cooperation. Over the past decades, only references have appeared in the literature to the development in October - November 1939 by the headquarters of the Latvian army of mobilization distribution No. 5, which proceeded from the possibility of war with the USSR<sup>558</sup> Unfortunately, the question of the state and plans of the armed forces of the Baltic states in the has hardly been studied in the literature. Available data show that the armies of the

Baltic countries were small<sup>559</sup> Thus, the armed forces of Estonia consisted of three branches of service: ground forces, air force and navy. The commander-in-chief was Lieutenant General J. Laidoner, who was subordinate to the Minister of War, Lieutenant General N. Reek (Chief of Staff - Major General A. Janson), who was in charge of supply issues, and to Prime Minister J. Uluots, who carried out general leadership. The troops were recruited on the basis of universal military service. The ground forces had a territorial and personnel structure: the territory of Estonia was divided into 8 military districts, which were subordinated in pairs to 4 infantry divisions and were engaged in mobilization and supply activities and work among the population. The 1st Infantry Division was stationed in the Rakvere-Narva region between Lake Peipus and the Gulf of Finland. The 2nd Infantry Division was stationed in the Tartu - Võru - Petseri region in the southeast of the country. The 3rd Infantry Division was stationed in the area of Tallinn and the islands of the Moonsund archipelago. The 4th Infantry Division was stationed in the Pärnu-Valga Viljandi area. In addition, the ground forces included an armored train regiment, an autotank regiment, guard and engineer battalions, a communications battalion and a chemical company. The Air Force (commanded by Major General Tomberg) consisted of 3 separate air divisions, an air base and a searchlight team (of 3 companies). Each air division included three detachments and an airfield team. 12 airfields were built in the country (5 more were under construction) and 8 landing sites. The naval forces (commanded by Captain-Major I. Santpank) included a hydro-aviation detachment, a naval division, the Peipsi flotilla, a training company and the sea fortresses Suuropi, Aegna and Naissaar. The naval division included the destroyer Sulev, submarines Lembit and



"Kalev", 2 gunboats, 2 minelayers, 3 minesweepers, 4 patrol boats, 7 auxiliary vessels and 5 icebreakers. The Chud flotilla consisted of 3 armed tugs and 5 motor boats. In addition, in Estonia there was a paramilitary organization "Defense League", consisting of 15 squads.

The commander-in-chief of the armed forces of Latvia was President K. Ulmanis. The direct leadership of the army was carried out by the Minister of War, General K. Berkis (Chief of Staff - General P. Rosenstein), who was subordinate to the ground forces (they included the Air Force) and the naval forces. The army consisted of 4 infantry and technical divisions. The 1st Kurzeme Infantry Division was stationed in the Jelgava-Saldus-Talsi area. The 2nd Vidzeme Infantry Division was stationed in the Riga region. The 3rd Latgale Infantry Division was stationed in the Cesis-Rezekne region. The 4th Zemgale Infantry Division was stationed in the Daugavpils area. Like the divisions, which bore the names of the provinces, their regiments bore the names of the counties. The technical division united an autotank brigade, a heavy artillery regiment, a sapper, anti-aircraft artillery regiment, an armored train regiment, a communications battalion and an air regiment and was stationed in Riga. The air regiment consisted of 6 detachments: 4 reconnaissance and 2 fighter. Latvia had 16 airfields and 10 landing sites. The Navy consisted of a division of submarines "Speedola" and "Ronis", a division of minesweepers "Virsaitis", "Imanta", "Viesturs" and a hydroaviation division of 5 aircraft. The main bases of the fleet were Riga, Ventspils and Liepaja, where naval aviation was also based. In addition, in Latvia there was a paramilitary organization "Aizsardze", subdivided into 19 county, 1 railway and 1 aviation regiments.

The armed forces of Lithuania consisted of the land army and aviation. The army was commanded by General V. Vitkauskas (Chief of Staff, General Pundzevicius), who was subordinate to the Minister of War, Brigadier General K. Musteikis. Conscription into the army was carried out on the basis of universal military service. The land army consisted of 3 infantry divisions, 1 cavalry brigade and technical units. The 1st Infantry Division was stationed in the areas of Vilna - Raseiniai - Panevezys-Kupishkis. The 2nd Infantry Division was stationed in the areas of Kaunas - Jonava - Siauliai Mariampol. The 3rd Infantry Division was stationed in the areas of Siauliai Plunge - Taurage. Separate parts of the cavalry brigade were located in Kaunas, Vilnius, Taurage and Vilkavishkis. The army included an engineering battalion, a communications battalion, an armored detachment, an auto detachment, as well as a military training vessel "President Smetona". The Lithuanian Air Force (commander - Brigadier General Gustaitis) included 4 air groups, an anti-aircraft division, a searchlight company, 5 air defense companies, a sound detection company, an airfield security battalion and a company of observation posts. There were 7 airfields in the republic (5 more were under construction) and 4 landing sites. In addition, in Lithuania there was a paramilitary organization "Shaulu Sayunga", subdivided into 20 detachments (regiments or battalions).

With such insignificant armed forces, cut off from any outside help, the Baltic states, naturally, tried not to aggravate relations with the USSR as much as possible. The economic difficulties caused by the war led to growing discontent among the population, especially in the cities, increasingly narrowing the social base of the ruling authoritarian regimes. Hopes for political change permeated ever deeper into Baltic societies. The German offensive on the Western Front and the breakthrough of the Wehrmacht to the English Channel on May 20, 1940 significantly changed the strategic situation in Europe. Among some segments of the population of the Baltics, fears revived again: after the victory in the West, Germany will resume expansion to the East, which will make these countries a theater of war. Part of the ruling circles of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania sought to get rid of Soviet tutelage at the cost of reorientation to Germany. In this situation, the events of May-June 1940 came as a complete surprise to them. By the summer of 1940, the following

Soviet troops were stationed in the Baltic states. The headquarters of the 65th OSK, the 123rd separate communications battalion, the 11th corps were located in Estonia.

anti-aircraft artillery division, 16th rifle division, 18th light tank brigade, 5th motorized mechanized detachment, 414th, 415th motor transport battalions, Special Air Force group consisting of the 35th, 52nd medium bomber, 7th, 53rd long-range bomber, 15th, 38th fighter regiments and other units. The administration of the 2nd USC, the 10th separate communications battalion, the 86th corps anti-aircraft artillery division, the 67th rifle division, the 6th light tank brigade, the 10th tank regiment, the 18th air brigade consisting of 31st medium bomber, 21st and 148th fighter regiments, 640th motor transport battalion and other units. In Lithuania, the headquarters of the 16th USC, the 46th separate communications company, the 19th corps anti-aircraft artillery division, the 5th rifle division, the 2nd light tank brigade, the 54th medium bomber and 10th fighter separate air regiments, 641st motor transport battalion and other units. In total, the troops numbered 66,946 people, 1,630 guns and mortars, 1,065 tanks, 150 armored vehicles, 5,579 vehicles and 526 aircraft<sup>561</sup>

On April 23, 1940, the directive of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 177122 was sent to the troops, in accordance with which it was required from June 1 to June 15, 1940 to change the troops stationed in the Baltic states since the autumn of 1939. People's Commissar of Defense Marshal of the Soviet Union S.K. On May 2, 1940, Timoshenko reported to the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the Defense Committee under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR on the postponement of the term for the change of troops for the period from July 1 to July 15 and named the specific units that were being prepared for the change. It was supposed to send to Estonia the 90th rifle division, the 13th tank brigade, the 77th separate mechanized detachment, the 23rd separate communications battalion, the 38th corps anti-aircraft artillery division, the 11th long-range bomber, the 10th medium bomber and the 7th fighter aviation regiments, 420th and 470th motor transport battalions. In Latvia - the 48th rifle division, the 1st tank brigade, the 8th tank regiment, the 54th separate communications battalion, the 12th corps anti-aircraft artillery division and the 633rd motor transport battalion. To Lithuania the 27th rifle division, the 27th tank brigade, the 30th separate communications battalion, the corps anti-aircraft artillery division, the 31st fighter aviation regiment and the motor transport battalion<sup>562</sup>

On May 5, 1940, the head of the Political Directorate of the Red Army, army commissar 1st rank L.Z. Mekhlis sent to the heads of the political departments of the LVO, KalVO and the Belarusian Special Military District (BOVO) a "Plan of political studies with Red Army soldiers and junior commanders in units intended to be sent to the Baltic countries," which should have been implemented immediately. In a report dated May 27, the head of the political department of the LVO, divisional commissar Gorokhov, reported on the progress in the preparation of troops, which was basically supposed to be completed by June 15<sup>63</sup> Meanwhile, on May 24, 1940, the Soviet plenipotentiary in Lithuania

reported to Moscow that on April 24 and May 18 located in Lithuania, two Red Army men fled: Nosov and Shmavgonets, who were wanted by the military command line. The very next day, Molotov summoned the Lithuanian envoy to Moscow, Natkyavichus, and told him that "the disappearance of these servicemen is being organized by some persons who enjoy the patronage of the organs of the Lithuanian government." Accusing the Lithuanian government of provocations, Molotov demanded to stop them, to find the missing soldiers and return them to units, expressing the hope of the Soviet government that Lithuania "will meet his proposals and will not force him to take other measures." The Lithuanian side took seriously the demarche of the Soviet leadership and already on May 26 expressed its "readiness to immediately conduct the most detailed investigation", to facilitate which it asked the Soviet government to provide "the data at its disposal." On May 27, it became clear that Shmavgonets and Pisarev had already returned to their units, but the proposal of the Lithuanian side to interrogate them together to speed up the investigation was rejected by the Soviet side under the pretext of exhausting both servicemen<sup>564</sup>. Officially, the Soviet side announced the abduction of 4 soldiers: Butaev, Shutov, Pisarev and Shmavgonets. Actually, this topic has never been studied in Russian historiography, which gave rise to a number of authors quite rightly to point out the lack of evidence

official Soviet version<sup>565</sup>. Now the materials of the NKVD investigative bodies and the Chief Military Prosecutor's Office, which were investigating these cases, have become available, making it possible to establish what exactly happened. As the investigation established, G.A. Butaev arrived at the 336th Infantry Regiment of the 5th Infantry Division in October 1939 and reported that he was a junior commander, although he had no documents to support this claim. Nevertheless, the command of the regiment approved him as a junior commander. After that, Butaev "began to ask the commander, commissar of the regiment and chief of staff to be appointed assistant commandant of the regiment, there was no order for the regiment to appoint his assistant commandant, but from November to February 1940, Butaev worked as assistant regiment commander. Having received unhindered exit from the territory of the regiment, Butaev was daily in the city of Vilna and its environs, visited brothels, drank with Lithuanian citizens,

recommended himself as an employee of the NKVD. After his desertion, letters were found from Lithuanian citizens in which they asked Butaev to accept them as agents. In order to smooth his actions, Butaev often informed the military commissar of the regiment Comrade Yablokov about the behavior of the command staff in the city, who was drinking with whom and what dens he went to. positions

On February 4, 1940, after a conversation with the prosecutor, whom Butaev asked not to put him on trial, he deserted. On May 12, 1940, while trying to detain him by the Lithuanian police, Butaev shot himself. to his brother, in which he wrote: "I escaped from the Red Army and am in a bourgeois state, and that you are no longer my brother, because I am a fascist, and you are a Bolshevik." The military prosecutor of the 16th USC, a military lawyer of the 1st rank, Drozdov, who took part in the investigation of this case, believed that the Lithuanian authorities killed Butaev, fearing that his capture would expose them. True, there is no evidence of this assumption in documents are not provided<sup>566</sup>.

On the night of April 25, 1940, a Red Army soldier of the 2nd Tank Brigade P.I. fled from the post with a rifle. Jesters. The investigation established that Shutov, being an undisciplined and apparently unbalanced person, had previously expressed his intention to desert, but no action was taken against him. The jesters were never found until June 14<sup>567</sup>. On May 18, N.Z. disappeared from the 41st separate company. Shmavgonets, who showed up on May 26 and said that he was abducted by Lithuanian citizens in Vilna. However, in the course of further investigation, Shmavgonets said that he deserted and hid with his friend Yu. Savitskaya, who introduced him to a certain Garlin, who offered Shmavgonets to cooperate with some anti-Soviet organization. Agreeing to this, Shmavgonets tried to answer Garlin's questions about the Soviet troops, but could not, because he knew nothing. Then Garlin invited him to return to the unit and find out the information of interest to him. As a legend, he suggested that Shmavgonets inform the command about his "abduction"<sup>568</sup>. Unfortunately, no documents shedding light on the Pisarev case have yet been found. Thus, the documents now available testify

that Butaev, Shutov and Shmavgonets were not victims of "abductions", but deserted from the Red Army. An audit of the party political work in parts of the 16th USC from May 27 to 30, 1940 showed that discipline in the auxiliary units of the 16th OSK was at a low level: there were frequent drunkenness among the senior and middle command staff, "an elementary list of people in companies were absent. The command staff did not participate in the verification of people "<sup>569</sup>. All this contributed to various disciplinary violations.

So, in addition to the above cases, there were other unauthorized absences. For example, the head of the food supply of the 641st autobattalion, quartermaster technician of the 1st rank M.E. Marmylev from February 5 to 8, 1940 was in unauthorized absence on the territory of Lithuania and drank<sup>570</sup>. On February 15, Red Army soldiers Kuzmademyanov and Shchukin, who were seconded to

divisions and worked in the command canteen, where they were seen stealing. They were removed from work and sent back to the location of the 190th Infantry Regiment, "but since there was no order to secondment, they were not accepted into the regiment and the indicated Red Army soldiers did not know where they were until March 3 and remembered them only after the Red Army soldiers, who saw Kuzmademyanov and Shchukin in the town of Alytus reported this. On March 3, Kuzmademyanov and Shchukin were interrogated by the prosecutor's office, after which they fled from the location of the unit and appeared only on March 5, after which they were arrested" 571. On June 12, 1940, junior commander V.T. disappeared from the 5th Infantry Division. Golovin. He exchanged uniforms for a civilian suit and sought to stay in Lithuania, hiding from the wanted list in every possible way. On June 17, he was detained by the Lithuanian police, handed over to the Soviet authorities, and on June 21 he was sentenced to capital punishment for treason.

Be that as it may, on May 30, 1940, the Izvestia newspaper published a "Communication of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs on the provocative actions of the Lithuanian authorities," which listed cases of the disappearance of Red Army soldiers from units located in Lithuania and placed all responsibility for this on the Lithuanian side. On June 1, the Lithuanian envoy in Moscow again tried to persuade the Soviet side to thoroughly investigate these allegations, but Molotov again did not support this idea. On June 2-3, the Soviet embassy in Lithuania drew Moscow's attention to the desire of the Lithuanian government to "surrender into the hands of Germany", the activation of "the activities of the fifth German column and the arming of members of the riflemen's union", and preparations for mobilization. All this exposes the "genuine intentions of the Lithuanian ruling circles", which, in the event of a settlement of the conflict, will only strengthen "their line against the treaty, going over to a 'businesslike' agreement with Germany, waiting only for an opportune moment for a direct strike

on the Soviet garrisons" 573. As the diplomatic conflict developed, direct Soviet military preparations also began, which, apparently, were discussed on June 5 and 7 (from 22.40 to 1.00 and from 19.20 to 20.20, respectively) in the Kremlin with the participation of Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov, People's Commissar of Defense Marshal S.K. Timoshenko, Chief of the General Staff Marshal B.M. Shaposhnikov, his deputies Lieutenant General I.V. Smorodinov and commander of the 2nd rank A.D. Loktionov, appointed commander of the BOVO troops, Colonel-General D.G. Pavlov and the commander of the LVO, commander of the 2nd rank K.A. Meretskova 574. According to the order of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 0028 dated June 3, 1940, the troops stationed in the territory of the Baltic States were excluded from the LVO, KalVO and BOVO from June 5 and transferred to the direct subordination of the People's Commissar of Defense through his deputy Loktionov. On the same day, the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR was issued, according to which "in connection with the difficult international situation" it was ordered "to detain the Red Army soldiers of the 3rd year of service in the ranks of the Red Army until January 1, 1941." and "until further notice, called up ... the command and command staff of the reserve." On June 4-7, 1940, the troops of the LVO, KalVO and BOVO were alerted and began to concentrate on the borders of the Baltic states under the guise of exercises, while the Soviet garrisons in the Baltic were put on alert. On June 8, Loktionov received an order to prepare the Soviet air units deployed in the Baltic States for possible military operations, to strengthen the security of airfields and prepare them for defense and receiving landing troops. The air regiments had to be ready for actions against airfields and enemy troops and for regrouping to airfields more protected by Soviet troops 575. On the evening of June 8, in the city of Lida, a secret meeting of the

command staff of the BOVO troops raised on alarm was held, at which the deputy commander of the district forces, Lieutenant General F.I. Kuznetsov (who is also the commander of the 11th Army) informed the audience about "possible actions against Lithuania." In the same place, on June 11, from 13 to 16 hours, a new meeting was held with the participation of Colonel-General D.G. Pavlov, who outlined the plan of military operations and the tasks of the troops, who were to inflict a swift defeat on the Lithuanian army, prevent its retreat to East Prussia and occupy Lithuania in 3-4 days. According to combat order No. 002 / op

dated June 12, the troops of the 11th Army, together with units of the 16th OSK, were to surround and destroy the enemy in the Kaunas area. To the 16th OSK stationed in Lithuania the task was to keep the areas of their deployment, to capture the main bridges on the rivers Neman and Nyaris and to ensure the landing of the 214th airborne brigade 5 km to the south Gayzhuny railway station, where 935 people were supposed to land. Together with units of the 16th USC, the paratroopers were supposed to capture the main objects Kaunas, to the airfield of which another 475 paratroopers would be deployed. preparation The operation was supposed to be completed by the morning of 15 June. June 13 to prepare the place landing near Gayzhun, a parachute group of 7 people was dropped, and from 21.30 14 June, the radio stations of the Soviet troops stationed in the Baltic were supposed to work only for reception, waiting for a prearranged signal to start the operation<sup>576</sup>.

At the southeastern borders of Lithuania and Latvia, the 3rd army was concentrated as part of the 4th, 24th Rifle and 3rd Cavalry Corps, commanded from Molodechno on June 10 relocated to Postavy. The 11th Army, whose headquarters were in Lida, consisted of the 10th, 11th rifle and 6th cavalry corps and deployed on southern border of Lithuania. Troops of the LVO and KalVO allocated for the operation were deployed near eastern borders of Estonia and Latvia. Between the Gulf of Finland and Lake Peipsi units of the 11th Infantry Division concentrated. South of Lake Pskov were deployed troops of the 8th Army (headquarters in Pskov) as part of the 1st, 19th rifle corps and the Special rifle corps from the KalVO troops. To reinforce the troops of the indicated districts from 8 June, the transfer of units of the 1st motorized rifle, 17th, 84th rifle divisions and the 39th, 55th light tank brigades from Moscow, 128th motorized rifle division from Arkhangelsk and the 55th Infantry Division from the Oryol military districts. On the borders Lithuanian troops completed the concentration and deployment in the starting areas by June 15, and on the borders of Latvia and Estonia - by June 16. Total for the Baltic campaign 3 armies, 7 rifle and 2 cavalry corps, 20 rifle, 2 motorized rifle, 4 cavalry divisions, 9 tank and 1 airborne brigades. In addition, the NKVD troops allocated one operational regiment for the operation and the 105th, 106th, 107th border detachment, concentrated in Grodno.

Table 15

Soviet grouping on June 15-16, 1940<sup>577</sup> Table 16

Number and

armament of troops on June 15-16, 1940<sup>578</sup>

composition mortar machine machine

LVO 122,981 2,946,347,106 7,080,673

KalVO 15,876,186,161 60,349,182

BOVO 221,260 2,946\* 1,565,245\* 11,860\* 1,140

Total 360,117 6,078 2 073 411 19 291 1 995 \*

According to the 11th Army data

calculated. In total, the Soviet military grouping on the borders of the Baltic states (including those deployed Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia corps) consisted of about 435 thousand people, up to 8,000 guns and mortars, over 3,000 tanks, over 500 armored vehicles. Grouping selected for Air Force operations included 18 medium bombers, 3 long-range bombers, 5 heavy bomber, 3 light bomber, 2 assault and 16 fighter air regiments and numbered 2,601 aircraft<sup>579</sup> As reported to the Military Council of the BOVO commander of the 3rd Army, during the marches, questions of their organization, intelligence, command and control, and, if possible, combat training was conducted. "Political-moral the condition of the units of the 3rd Army is healthy. All personnel in full determination are ready carry out any tasks of the party and government"<sup>580</sup>. The

Soviet leadership did not rule out the possibility of conducting full-scale military actions, so the LVO, KalVO and BOVO were ordered to deploy a network of hospitals.

According to the telegram of the Chief of the General Staff No. 16284/III dated June 8, 1940, it was ordered "to close down evacuation units and hospitals and transfer them to peacetime states until further notice. Keep the hospital in a state of readiness." Dismissal to the reserve from these institutions was terminated. On June 14, 1940, the Chief of the General Staff, by telegram No. OM / 952, ordered by 24:00 on June 16 to call on all personnel and vehicles to staff evacuation hospitals and military medical trains, the mobilization of which was required to be completed on June 17 and 20, respectively. All those mobilized should have been told that this was a regular training camp. The rear units and institutions necessary to ensure the full-fledged combat activity of the troops were deployed in the districts<sup>581</sup>

The concentrating troops observed camouflage measures and monitored the adjacent Lithuanian territory. On June 14, 1940, an air and sea blockade of the Baltic states was established, which was carried out by the Light Forces Detachment of the KBF (cruiser Kirov, 2 leaders, 3 destroyers, 10 submarines, 2 minesweepers and a gunboat). On the same day, the commander of the BOVO troops issued an order on the treatment of prisoners of war, according to which their transfer to the NKVD was to be carried out at the border at Bigosovo and Svetsyany stations for the 3rd Army, Sola and Martsinkantsy for the 11th Army. Allowances for prisoners of war were determined, the seizure of personal belongings (except for weapons) was prohibited, and receipts were to be issued for requisitioned valuables<sup>582</sup>. The NKVD authorities prepared camps for the reception of 50-70 thousand prisoners, and the NKVD border troops were ordered to ensure the crossing of the border by the Red Army, which provided for the creation of shock and fighter groups. Their task included conducting reconnaissance and reconnaissance, choosing a place to cross the border, preparing crossings and watercraft, and after the start of hostilities, destroying the headquarters and units of the enemy's border service, communications, barriers, minefields, etc. So, for example, on June 8, the commander of the LVO ordered the head of the border troops of the NKVD of the Leningrad District: "Before the general crossing of the state border with Estonia and Latvia by the Red Army units, the NKVD border units located on the border, together with the units of the Red Army, with a sudden and bold raid, capture and destroy the Estonian and Latvian border cordons<sup>583</sup>

On June 15, 1940, increased nervousness at the border led to the following events. "On June 14, the head of the 10th border detachment, Comrade Inechkin, received an order from the commander of the 28th (Special) Rifle Corps, in whose operational subordination this border detachment has been since June 12 of this year, - to occupy the initial position by 3 o'clock on June 15 by units. On the basis of this order, the head of the border detachment, Comrade Inechkin, ordered the fighter groups of border guards to be withdrawn to a given direction near the border, at the same time indicating that all commanders should expect a special order to start operations. At 0330 on June 15, the head of the fighter group Lieutenant Komissarov of the 14th outpost of the 10th border detachment arbitrarily crossed the Soviet-Latvian border, destroyed and burned the Latvian Maslenka cordon and, having captured 5 border guards, 6 men, 5 women and 1 child, returned to our territory. of the 1st fighter group, political instructor Beiko, having heard shooting and grenade explosions, also crossed the border into Latvia and attacked the Latvian cordon Blunty and, having captured 1 sergeant, four border guards and five children, returned to our territory. Lieutenant Komissarov and political instructor Beiko have been removed from the border and are being escorted, by order of the chief of staff of the district troops Comrade Rakutin, to the headquarters of the border detachment. The investigation is being conducted by Comrade Rakutin, chief of staff of the district troops. Those

captured at the Latvian cordons are on our territory. "<sup>584</sup> To ensure political work during the preparation of the operation, the Mehlis on June 13, 1940 approved a plan for distributing books about Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to the LVO (respectively 20 thousand, 20 thousand, 2 thousand books). ), BOVO (2 thousand, 2 thousand, 20 thousand) and KalVO (4 thousand, 4 thousand, 4 thousand). the time of the trip to the Baltics, in which

The need for Soviet action was interpreted as follows: "The unlucky rulers of the Baltic states, not wanting to fulfill the treaty with the Soviet Union in good faith, embarked on the path of provocations against our Motherland and the Red Army units located in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

The Soviet government, meeting the needs of the Lithuanian people, handed over to the State of Lithuania the city of Vilnius and the Vilna region. Despite this, due to the anti-Soviet orientation of the Lithuanian government, recently in Lithuania there have been a number of cases of kidnapping of Red Army soldiers and their torture in order to get "language" about our units. After the protest of the Soviet Government, the Lithuanian authorities, under the guise of investigating and taking measures against the perpetrators, crack down

on the friends of the USSR. During the war with the White Finns, the governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, incited by England and France, negotiated among themselves about an attack on the Soviet corps stationed in the Baltic states. They dreamed of throwing units of the Red Army into the sea. Spy nests are planted in areas where Soviet troops are stationed. Under the flag of freedom of the press, unbridled anti-Soviet propaganda is carried out in newspapers and on the radio, while at the same time citizens are persecuted for reading the news

All the provocative activities of the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian governments are aimed at disrupting the mutual assistance treaties concluded with the Soviet Union. Thus, they emphasize their readiness to turn the Baltic states into a springboard for a war against our Motherland.

Our task is clear. We want to ensure the security of the USSR, to close the approaches to Leningrad, our northwestern borders, from the sea with a strong castle. Through the heads of the anti-people clique ruling in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, we will fulfill our historical tasks and at the same time help the working people of these countries to free themselves from the exploiting gang of capitalists and

landowners. ensuring the rapid defeat of the enemy ... The task of the Red Army, as indicated above, is to protect the borders of the Soviet Union, to seize a bridgehead that the imperialists want to use against the USSR. On its banners the Red Army brings freedom to the working people from exploitation and oppression. The workers will be liberated from capitalist slavery, unemployment will be put an end to, farm laborers, landless and landless peasants will receive landowners' lands. Taxes will be eased and temporarily completely removed. Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia will become a Soviet outpost on our sea and land borders. The preparations for the offensive must be carried out in the strictest secrecy. Resolutely deal with talkativeness. Everyone should know only what is right for him and within the prescribed time. "Measures were provided for working among the enemy troops, the main goal of which" is to quickly disintegrate his army, demoralize

the rear and, thus, help the command of the Red Army in the shortest possible time and to achieve complete victory with the least sacrifices." It was necessary "to show on concrete facts the plight of the working masses of the country fighting against us, the terror and violence reigning in the rear ... To show the happy and joyful life of workers and peasants in the USSR. Explain how the workers and peasants of the USSR govern the state without capitalists and landlords. To contrast this with the disenfranchised position of the workers and peasants in the capitalist countries. Show the fundamental difference between tsarist Russia, a prison of peoples, and the Soviet Union, a fraternal union of liberated peoples... Political workers are taking a serious test. They must justify the enormous trust placed in them by the party, the government, Comrade Stalin"585 For the purpose of propagandistic influence on the military personnel and the population of the enemy, leaflets were developed that were supposed to be scattered over the territory of the

Baltic on the first day of hostilities. In the spirit of the above directive, they outlined violations by the Baltic mutual assistance treaty governments, thanks to

by which the USSR saved Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania from being drawn into the war, and "units of the Red Army stationed ... in separate points" of these countries were "reliable protection and the best guarantee of freedom and independence" of their peoples. Violations of treaties force the Red Army to "put an end to anti-Soviet provocations." "The Soviet Union will not allow the age-old friendship of the Soviet and (Baltic) peoples to be disrupted, that (the Baltic states) be turned by the imperialists into a springboard for an attack on the Soviet Union, and (the Baltic peoples) be plunged into the crucible of a bloody imperialist slaughter." "The Red Army takes under its mighty and faithful protection the independence and freedom" of the peoples of the Baltic states, "will liberate you from the capitalists and landowners"<sup>586</sup>. Due to the peaceful resolution of the conflict, these leaflets were never used.

Meanwhile, on June 7, Prime Minister of Lithuania A. Merkys arrived in Moscow, where Soviet-Lithuanian negotiations began. Molotov accused the Lithuanian government of being disloyal to the USSR, which, in his opinion, was expressed in the abduction of Red Army soldiers and other provocations, delaying the investigation, arrests of Lithuanian service personnel in Soviet garrisons, and excessively frequent gatherings of Šaulists. Any justifications of Merkys were dismissed without consideration by Molotov, who believed that the Lithuanian political police were to blame for everything. Merkys's proposal to create a regime of complete isolation of the Soviet troops from the population in order to avoid new problems was rejected by Molotov, who suggested that the Lithuanian side itself determine the punishment for its hostile behavior. At the same time, the Soviet leadership was emphatically loyal to Latvia and Estonia. On June 8, an agreement was signed with Tallinn on the general administrative conditions for the stay of Soviet troops.

During a conversation on June 9, Merkys's new request for a joint investigation of the incident was rejected by Molotov, who turned to the topic of the Baltic Entente, describing it as an anti-Soviet military alliance hidden from the USSR. Merkys's objections, based on the absence of any evidence, were dismissed by Molotov, who believed that this was not a legal, but a political question that needed an answer. On June 10, Urbshis arrived in Moscow, and on June 11, together with Merkys, he took part in the negotiations. All proposals of the Lithuanian side to negotiate and resolve the incident were rejected by Molotov, who demanded to take action on the claims of the USSR, to dismiss the Minister of the Interior K. Skuchas and the head of the political police department A. Povilaitis. On June 12, the Soviet embassy in Lithuania reported to Moscow about the actions of the Lithuanian commission, which was sabotaging the study of the activities of the Okhrana. On June 14, Molotov informed the USSR plenipotentiaries in Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania about the attitude towards the Baltic Entente, which "is in fact anti-Soviet in nature" and is "a violation of the pacts that prohibit participation in coalitions hostile to the Contracting Parties"<sup>587</sup>. On the same day at 2 pm, Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR V.G. Dekanozov received Urbshis, who, announcing the resignation of Skuchas and Povilaitis, again denied the involvement of Lithuanian authorities in the

disappearances of Soviet soldiers and the anti-Soviet nature of the Baltic Entente. It seemed that nothing foreshadowed a sharp change in the course of negotiations, but at 23.50 on June 14, Urbshis summoned Molotov and handed him an ultimatum from the Soviet government (published on June 16 in Izvestia), according to which Skuchas and Povilaitis should be put on trial, a government should be created that would honestly carry out an agreement on mutual assistance, and allow additional units of the Red Army to enter the territory of Lithuania. Explaining that it was planned to introduce 3-4 additional corps (9-12 divisions) to all important points in Lithuania, Molotov promised that the troops would not interfere in anything, but the new government should be pro-Soviet. To reassure the Lithuanians, they were told that these were temporary measures, although this "would depend on the future Lithuanian government." Molotov warned that if the demands were not accepted, the troops would still be brought in immediately. The ultimatum expired at 10:00 on June 15. Having received a Soviet ultimatum, Lithuanian President A. Smetona insisted on the resistance of the Red Army and the withdrawal of Lithuanian troops to East Prussia, but General



Vitkauskas, who expressed the interests of anti-German officers, refused. As a result, at 9.45 in the morning, Urbshis informed Molotov about the satisfaction of Soviet demands and the composition of the new government headed by General Rashtikis. In response, Molotov stated that the question of the composition of the government would be decided in Kaunas, where the Soviet representative

would arrive. On June 14-16, the Soviet plenipotentiaries in Latvia and Estonia informed Moscow about the need to increase vigilance at Soviet naval bases, about the suspicious exercises of the Latvian units, the hostile attitude of the ruling circles of Latvia towards the USSR, and about mobilization in Estonia. On June 16, Molotov invited the Latvian envoy F. Kotsins at 14.00, and the Estonian envoy A. Rey at 14.30, and handed them Soviet ultimatums, which assessed the activities of the Baltic Entente and contained a demand to form pro-Soviet governments, to allow the deployment of additional Red Army troops. The entry of troops (2 corps into Latvia and 2-3 corps into Estonia) Molotov again presented as a temporary measure. As he explained, new governments would be formed with the participation of Soviet representatives in Riga and Tallinn. Kocins notified the incident on the Soviet-Latvian border on June 15, and Molotov promised to look into it. Ray drew the interlocutor's attention to the fact that in the fall of 1939 the Baltic Entente did not raise objections from the USSR, and tried to soften the terms of the ultimatum, since there were no provocations, but Molotov did not discuss these issues. The deadline for ultimatums for Latvia expired at 23.00, and for Estonia at 24.00 on 16 June<sup>589</sup>

Having received a Soviet ultimatum, Ulmanis turned to the German envoy G. von Kotze with a request to allow the government and the army to evacuate to East Prussia, but was refused. At 19.45 Kotsinsh and at 23.00 Rey again visited Molotov and announced the agreement of their governments to satisfy the Soviet demands. The parties agreed on the candidacies of military representatives to resolve practical issues. At 22.40 Kotsinsh again visited Molotov, informing about the resignation of the government. Molotov said that Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR A.Ya. Vyshinsky. At 01:00 on June 17, Molotov informed Rey about the time (05:00) and the places where the Soviet troops crossed the border and that A.A. would be sent to Tallinn. Zhdanov. 10 minutes later, Molotov informed Kotsinsh that the Red Army would cross the border at 5 am, and in the area of Novo Aleksandrovsk and Janishki at 8 am<sup>590</sup>. Accordingly, at 2.55 on June 17, the commanders of the BOVO and LVO received an order from the Chief of the General Staff: "1. The crossing of the Latvian border by Soviet troops begins at 5 am on June 17 ... 2. Separate units of the Soviet troops that crossed the border will enter the cities of Riga, Mitava, Daugavpils, Rezekne, Kreyburg...". The troops of the 2nd USC were tasked to set out at 0800 to occupy Mitava and Tukums.

While diplomatic negotiations were going on, the troops of the 11th and 3rd armies completed their concentration during June 14 and by the morning of June 15 "took up their starting positions, awaiting a signal" to start the invasion. But at 7 o'clock, by order of the commander of the BOVO, the operation was suspended. At 8 o'clock in the morning, negotiations began at the Gudogai station between General Vitkauskas and the commander of the BOVO, Colonel General D.G. Pavlov, which ended at 23.10 with the signing of the "Agreement on the Additional Deployment of Red Army Troops", which indicated 11 areas for temporary deployment of troops, the procedure for transportation by rail, hiring labor, and purchasing fodder in Lithuania for Soviet

Directive PUR No. 5258 ss received by the troops on June 13-14 was canceled, and Mekhlis, who was in Minsk, prepared a new directive for the political bodies of the BOVO and LVO. Now the basis of political work was to be the TASS message with the Soviet ultimatum; it was necessary to achieve a political upsurge and approval by the personnel of the wise Stalinist foreign policy and all measures aimed "to secure our western and northwestern borders." It should have been explained that the consent of the Lithuanian government to the introduction of troops does not solve all the problems, there are anti-Soviet elements who are armed and waiting. Therefore, it is necessary to exercise vigilance and observe military discipline, violations of which should be punished according to the laws of war.

Political agencies should have ensured a good attitude of the population towards the units of the Red Army, which, "entering Lithuania, carry out the historical tasks of our socialist homeland. We ensure the security of the Soviet northwestern borders, we reach an advantageous strategic line that will allow the peoples of the Soviet Union to continue their peaceful work, guarding the world's first socialist state of workers and peasants from all lovers of someone else's good." In conversations with personnel, it was required to explain that "every war waged by the state of workers and peasants is a just war, a war of liberation"<sup>593</sup>.

The peaceful solution of the Soviet-Lithuanian conflict required the reorientation of the troops deployed near the borders of the Baltic states from the preparation of military operations to the unhindered occupation of territories. While negotiations were going on, the BOVO troops received combat order No. 2, which set the time (15.00) and the place to cross the border of Lithuania. The command of the 11th and 3rd armies, by their orders, set before the troops the task of advancing through the territory of Lithuania, which began at 15.15 on June 15. The 16th USC was given the task of occupying Kaunas and the bridge near Jonava and holding them until the main forces of the 11th Army approached. Despite the agreement of the parties and the order of General Vitkauskas on a loyal attitude towards the Soviet units, when the Soviet troops crossed the border, there were separate skirmishes with the Lithuanian military personnel, which were either suppressed or resolved during the negotiations. There were cases of excess of authority by the Red Army, which amounted to the disarmament and capture of Lithuanian soldiers. So, the reconnaissance group of the 185th rifle division, sent to the border post, crossed the border and captured the Lithuanian outpost, hacking to death 1 soldier. The command and political agencies stopped such arbitrariness and explained

to the personnel their rights and obligations<sup>594</sup> On June 15-16, Soviet troops occupied most of the territory of Lithuania. On June 16, Soviet troops received the task of entering the territory of Estonia and Latvia. At 9.00 am on June 17, the military representatives of the parties, J. Laidoner and K.A. Meretskov (Deputy People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR since June 9) met in Narva, and D.G. Pavlov and Colonel O. Udentysh - at the Ionishkis station. The negotiations ended at 15.00 and 13.00, respectively, with the signing of agreements on the introduction of additional troops, which indicated the places of temporary deployment of Soviet troops (9 divisions in Latvia and 12 in Estonia) and stipulated economic issues<sup>595</sup>. The troops of the 8th Army, deployed on the border in combat formations "in readiness for the offensive", were forced to go to the marching position in 1-2 hours and, having received the task of occupying the most important points, at 5.00 on June 17 began to advance to Estonia and the north-eastern regions of Latvia. Parts of the 65th USC at 13.15, together with the landing of the KBF, under the cover of the battleship October Revolution, which had become on the roadstead, 4 guards and 2 destroyers, occupied the fortresses Suuropi, Naissaar, Aegna and Tallinn. The landing operation in Gayzhuny was canceled, and on June 16, 720 paratroopers from the 214th airborne brigade on 63 TB-3 aircraft were transferred to the Siauliai airfield, where they were assigned to the 2nd and 27th tank brigades as a tank landing 3rd Army, concentrated by the end of the day in the Ionishkis area. On the same day, Captain Starchak, head of the airborne service of the BOVO Air Force, landed with a parachute in the Riga region. At 10.20 am on June 17, tank brigades and units of the 121st and 126th rifle divisions crossed the Latvian border and at about 13.00 occupied Riga. The remaining troops of the 3rd Army occupied the southeastern, and parts of the 2nd OSK the western regions of Latvia. In the following days, the troops continued to occupy the Baltic states, which was basically completed by June 21, 1940. Despite the peaceful advance, the troops had losses, which, according to incomplete data, amounted to 58 people killed (15 suicides, 28 died, 15 drowned) and 158 people wounded<sup>596</sup>.

From June 21, the command of the 8th Army was located in Tartu, the 3rd Army - in Riga, and the 11th Army - in Kaunas. Accordingly, the armies were reorganized. The corps commanders were responsible for the order, safety of military installations, relations with the armed forces of the republics, but they were forbidden to interfere in

politics. The troops were ordered "in conversations with the population and local authorities ... respect the independence of the Lithuanian state and explain that the Red Army fulfills only a peace treaty on mutual assistance" 597.

units formed for the Baltic operation. On June 21, 1940, an order was issued to disbanding by June 26, 1940 evacuation hospitals and ambulance trains. Communication parts from Idrity, according to the order of the General Staff No. OM / 755 of June 26, 1940, were sent to order of the Kyiv Special Military District, where on June 21 214-

I am an airborne brigade. Table 17

Grouping of

troops in the Baltic states on June 21, 1940 599

sent a memorandum No. 390 ss to Stalin and Molotov: "In order to ensure the speedy preparation of the Baltic theater of operations, I consider it necessary to begin immediately, on the territory of the occupied republics, to the implementation of the following measures:

1. Take the border with East Prussia and the Baltic coast immediately our border troops to prevent espionage and sabotage activities from side of the western neighbor.

2. Introduce one (first of all) regiment of troops into each of the occupied republics NKVD for the protection of internal order.

3. It is possible to resolve the issue "with the government" of the occupied republics as soon as possible. 4. To begin disarming and disbanding the armies of the occupied republics. Disarm the population, the police and existing paramilitary organizations.

5. Entrust the protection of objects, guard and garrison service to our troops. 6. Resolutely embark on the Sovietization of the occupied republics. 7. On the territory of the occupied republics, to form the Baltic Military District with headquarters in Riga.

Appoint the commander of the SAVO, Colonel General, as the commander of the district troops Apanasenko.

Form the headquarters of the district from the headquarters of the 8th army. 8. On the territory of the district, start work on preparing it as a theater of military actions (construction of fortifications, alteration of railways, road and road construction, warehouses, stockpiling, etc.). I will

present the theater preparation plan additionally "600. A more radical proposal was made by the commander of the BOVO, who sent on June 21 a note to the People's Commissar of Defense: "The existence in one place of parts of the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian armies consider it impossible. I make the following suggestion. Armies of all 3 states to disarm and withdraw weapons to the Soviet Union. Or after cleaning the officer's composition and strengthening of units by our command staff, I admit the possibility at first in the near future to use units of the Lithuanian and Estonian armies outside the BOVO for war, approximately - against the Romanians, Turks, Afghans and Japanese. In all cases, I consider Latvians necessary to disarm completely. After the armies are finished, immediately (48 hours) Disarm the entire population of all 3 countries. Shoot for failure to hand over weapons. To above the listed activities need to start in the coming days in order to have freedom of hands for the basic mobilization preparation of the district "601. True, so rough measures did not find support in Moscow and the Soviet leadership decided to implement proposal of the People's Commissar of Defense.

First of all, on June 17-21, with the help of Soviet emissaries, "people's" government, the disarmament of the population and paramilitary organizations began, which by July 15, 1940, 36,214 rifles and carbines, 21,250 pistols, 433 light and 17 heavy machine guns, 4,654 cold weapons, 2,835 grenade, 608 heavy pieces, 1 tank and 5,510,013 cartridges 602. June 20, 1940 was approved the decision of the Defense Committee under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR No. 267 ss / s "On approval

organization of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet and measures to strengthen the defense of the western regions of the Finnish bay", which established "the place of permanent residence of the Military Council of the KBF port of Paldiski" and outlined measures "to create an air defense organization on the Hanko peninsula and ensuring the construction of coastal defense on the islands of Ezel, Dago and the south coast Irbensky Strait"603. On June

30, the Chief of the General Staff presented the People's Commissar of Defense with a draft directive on deployment of the Red Army, compiled taking into account the creation of the Baltic military district (PribVO), in which it was proposed to deploy 10 rifle, 2 tank, 1 motorized, 2 cavalry divisions and 1 tank brigade604. July 4 People's Commissar

Defense and Chief of the General Staff in a memorandum to the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR

finally formulated the ideas of the military-territorial structure of the Baltic States and clarified the composition of the future district, which was supposed to include 11 rifle, 2 tank, 1 motorized division and 9 artillery regiments605. After the approval of these proposals

By decree of the Council of People's Commissars No. 1193-464 ss of July 6, 1940, the People's Commissar of Defense issued an order on July 11 No. 0141, which set the task by July 31 to form on the territory of Lithuania, Latvia and western regions of the Kalinin region of the PribVO. KalVO was disbanded, and its management turned to the formation of the management of the PribVO in Riga. Territory of Estonia was included in the Leningrad Military District, the eastern regions of the Kalinin Region in the Moscow Military District, and the Smolensk area in BOVO, which was renamed the Western OVO. Troop Commander PribVO was appointed Colonel-General A.D. Loktionov, Chief of Staff Lieutenant General P.S. Klenov, the commander of the Air Force of the district, Lieutenant General G.P. Kravchenko, and Former commander of the 65th Rifle Corps was appointed commander of the 8th Army of the LVO Lieutenant General A.A. Tyurin606 . It should be noted that all these organizational measures were held before the formal incorporation of the Baltic countries into the USSR.

Simultaneously with the transfer of troops to the PribVO, which was being created in July 1940, to strengthen defense of the Moonsund Islands, the 3rd separate rifle brigade was formed. According to the order of NPO No. 0190 dated August 17, 1940, the PribVO was transferred to the territory of Estonia and the district was renamed Special (PribOVO), and the western regions Kalinin region departed MVO. On the same day, an order was given to reorganize armies of the Baltic republics into the territorial rifle corps of the Red Army, according to which the governments of these countries were for the first time "informed about education "Military District in their territories 607. Table 18

#### Enlargement

of the forces 608 on August 1, 1940 on

October 20, 1940. June 22, 1941 Corps 5 9 10 divisions 15,23

25 brigades 3 4 4

4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4

4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4

4 4

4 4

4 mortars 3,242 6,345 7,019

Tanks 1,025 1,558 1,549

Armored vehicles 257 434 394 Motor

vehicles 8,883 16,202 19,111

Aircraft 675 1,316 1,344 Speaking about the reaction of the great powers to these events, A.G. Dongarov, N.G. . Peskov Semiryaga note that England was busy with the problems of the war in Western Europe, and the United States did not recognize territorial changes in the Baltics, but did not undertake any serious countermeasures. The position of Germany, formulated on June 17, 1940, was reduced to the fact that the events in the Baltic states "concern only Russia and the Baltic states. Therefore, in view of our invariably friendly relations with the Soviet Union, we have no reason to worry, which is openly attributed to us part of the foreign press". On the same day, Molotov officially informed the German

ambassador in Moscow on the causes and course of events in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. On June 23, a TASS message was published, which refuted rumors about the concentration of 100-150 Soviet divisions near the borders of East Prussia and indicated that there were only 18-20 divisions in the Baltic States, which did not have the goal of exerting "pressure" on Germany, with which there were no good relations. be able to sway with such absurd rumors. In the next six months, Soviet-German negotiations were conducted regarding the southwestern part of the territory of Lithuania, which are interpreted by S.A. Gorlov as the struggle of the Soviet leadership for its territorial integrity<sup>611</sup>. Such a reaction of the great powers made it possible to proclaim Soviet power in the Baltic States and annex it to the USSR.

Covering further political events in the Baltic states in June-August 1940, some authors argue that popular revolutions took place there, generated by internal processes<sup>612</sup>. A.S. Orlov and N.P. Shuranov believe that the role of the Red Army was reduced only to political pressure on the ruling circles of these countries in order to prevent the suppression of the actions of the population, which ensured the peaceful nature of the events, and joining the USSR allowed them to maintain their statehood and identity<sup>613</sup>. S.V. Volkov and Yu.V. Yemelyanov believe that the local communist parties acted contrary to the instructions from Moscow, which led to the revolution and the creation of people's governments. Democratic elections on July 14-15, 1940 gave power to supporters of unification with the USSR, which was done, but instead of socialism, these countries received Stalinism, and only after the German occupation of 1941-1944. understood that this is good. YES. Volkogonov admits<sup>615</sup> that Stalin's methods were used in these events, but on a small scale (?!). More critically these events are covered by M.I. Semiryaga, D.V. Bleyer and

I.R. Schneider, pointing out that everything was done at the behest of emissaries from Moscow, the elections were held in violation of domestic law and without alternative candidates, the election platform did not mention joining the USSR<sup>616</sup>. A.G. Dongarov and N.G. Peskova also associate internal political changes in the Baltics with the introduction of additional Red Army forces and note that already in June 1940, relations between these countries and the USSR lost their interstate nature, although they retained the form of such<sup>617</sup>. Socialist transformations began, accompanied by repressions, which allowed R.A. Medvedev to draw a conclusion about the bloodless nature of the revolutions in the Baltics<sup>618</sup>. M.I. Semiryaga, who is inclined to look for alternatives, believes that referendums should have been held in these countries and people's democratic republics (?) should have been created, which are in a confederation with the USSR, although this option clearly does not take into account historical realities. In his opinion, it is not clear whether these events can be designated by the term "occupation", since there is no clear definition of it, but the annexation of these countries by the Soviet Union is obvious<sup>619</sup>.

Speaking about the consequences of this action of the USSR, most authors consider it anti-German. A.S. Orlov sees in it a desire to create an underground against Germany and a threat to East Prussia, but believes that the inclusion of these countries in the Soviet Union was a political miscalculation of the Soviet leadership, because it complicated relations with England and the USA without eliminating the threat from Germany. I.N. Venkov focuses on the protection of this region from German expansion, and R.A. Medvedev believes that, although the Soviet borders were pushed back, a strong rear did not work<sup>621</sup>.

The introduction of a significant amount of documentary material into scientific circulation in recent years has placed the study of the problems of Soviet policy towards the Baltic states on a solid basis of facts, and the problems of Soviet-Baltic relations have received a radical reassessment in Russian historiography. Today it is quite clear that the historical myth enshrined in the official Soviet version does not correspond to the historical past. Even the supporters of this version are not able to give any serious arguments in support of it and began to focus on various justifications for the actions of the then Soviet leadership. However, as S.V. Volkov and Yu.V. Yemelyanov, although "sovereign status

many countries of the world, located within various strategic boundaries, was protected by international law", but "in practice, these legal provisions were ignored" in the conditions of the Second World War by all its main participants, including But if such actions were the rule justification is · during the war, it is unclear including the USSR<sup>622</sup> whether any needed in this case. The actions of the USSR in

relation to the Baltic states, in contrast to the measures to annex other territories of Eastern Europe, which were considered by the Soviet "sphere of interest", provide an example of a complex, multi-way combination. Recognition by Germany of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as a zone of Soviet interests and the war in Europe allowed the USSR to impose mutual assistance treaties on these countries, which gave Moscow a legal lever of influence in the region, recognized by England and France as a lesser evil compared to the German occupation. defiantly did not interfere in the internal affairs of these countries, patiently waiting in the wings. The defeat of France and the expulsion of the British army from the continent opened the way for the annexation of the Baltic states. The diplomatic conflict created by the USSR and the threat of a military invasion put the Baltic governments in front of a choice - fight or capitulation. Given the futility of military resistance and the lack of interest of the great powers of Europe in the affairs of the Baltic states, it was decided to capitulate, and the Soviet leadership, thus violating all their agreements with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, brought in troops and began a targeted sovietization of the region. Thus, using the Anglo-French German contradictions, the USSR managed to regain control over a strategically important region, strengthen its position in the Baltic Sea and create a foothold against East Prussia.

### **The Soviet Union and the struggle for the Balkans**

The Balkans have traditionally been the object of the struggle of the great powers for influence, in which the Soviet Union also took part, interested both in ensuring the security of its southwestern borders and in strengthening its influence in southeastern Europe. Earlier in the national historiography of the actions of the USSR in the Balkans in 1939-1941. were sparingly presented in the spirit of selecting individual facts to illustrate the struggle of Soviet diplomacy to preserve peace in the Balkans and protect them from German expansion. In recent years, new sources and studies have appeared that make it possible to more objectively consider the issues of the Balkan policy of the USSR. However, no comprehensive study has yet appeared that highlights Moscow's involvement in the struggle for influence in the Balkans. Unfortunately, the state of the source base does not allow today to answer all the questions that arise and fully cover all aspects of this complex topic. At the same time, it seems that further study of the Balkan policy of the USSR, taking into account the events of the beginning of World War II and the positions of other interested parties, will make it possible to understand the goals pursued by the Soviet leadership and

the methods for achieving them. After World War I, the political map of Southeast Europe changed. Yugoslavia, Romania and Greece, oriented towards England and France, which allowed them to resist attempts to increase the influence of Italy, sought to maintain the status quo, while Hungary and Bulgaria were interested in revising the Versailles agreements. By the mid 1930s. Germany returned the economic positions lost after the First World War in South-Eastern Europe, which, in the conditions of the self-elimination of England and France from the Balkan problems, led to an increase in the political influence of Berlin. The USSR, which supported Turkey in its confrontation with the West, sought to use the general instability and revolutionary movements in the Balkans to regain positions lost after 1917. Subsequently, local communist parties became conductors of Soviet influence, which, due to a number of socio-political problems in their countries, had a certain support of the population. Soviet-French dialogue and

negotiations on the Eastern Pact allowed the USSR in 1934 to establish diplomatic relations with Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania. As a rule, the conservative ruling elites of the countries of South-Eastern Europe were anti-communist and did not seek rapprochement with Moscow. With the outbreak of World War II, the countries of Southeast Europe declared neutrality, taking a wait-and-see attitude between the two military-political blocs, which led to an intensification of the diplomatic struggle for influence in Southeast Europe. The USSR did not stand aside either. In an effort to keep Turkey from

rapprochement with Britain and France, which began in 1936, the USSR used the Soviet-Turkish negotiations on a mutual assistance pact that began in August 1939. At the same time, Turkey was negotiating an alliance with England and France, who were interested in the benevolent position of Ankara to ensure the fulfillment of their guarantees to Greece and Romania, which required the preservation of a favorable regime for the Straits. In this situation, Ankara declared to Moscow that it did not want to enter into conflict with England and France, and the Western allies were informed that the Turks would not assume any anti-Soviet obligations. Thus, possible treaties were to be directed against Germany and Italy, which was in the interests of England and France, who sought to worsen Soviet-German relations. Under these conditions, on October 16, the Soviet leadership put forward a reservation about its non-direction against Germany and a protocol on the regime of the Straits as conditions for concluding an agreement with Turkey. Ankara refused to consider these conditions, and Moscow failed to influence Turkey's position regarding the agreement with England and France, which was concluded on October 19, 1939 and provided for mutual assistance of the parties in the event of a war in the Eastern Mediterranean. At the same time, Turkey made a reservation that it would not take any measures directed against the USSR. On October 28, 1939, the USSR announced its refusal to continue negotiations with Turkey<sup>623</sup>, and materials appeared in the Soviet press condemning Turkey for an alliance with England and France and refusal to "strengthen friendship with the Soviet Union"<sup>624</sup>

At the same time, the USSR tried to expand a possible agreement with Turkey by bringing Bulgaria into it, which was seen as a country that occupied a key position in the Balkans. Penetration into Bulgaria would allow the USSR to squeeze Romania into the grip of two fronts, get a military-political base for the struggle for the Straits and penetration into Yugoslavia and Greece. From the summer of 1939, Moscow expanded its economic ties with Sofia and declared support for Bulgarian territorial claims to Romania and Greece, but the Bulgarian leadership feared a political rapprochement with the USSR. On September 15, 1939, Bulgaria declared its neutrality in the war, while noting its desire for a peaceful revision of the Treaty of Neuilly. The military measures taken by Turkey in the area of the Straits led to the fact that Bulgaria decided to probe the position of the USSR in the course of the Soviet-<sup>25</sup>, 1939. Moscow tried to get Bulgarian soundings on September 20 - 3 on November Sofia's consent to conclude a mutual assistance treaty. However, things did not go beyond these soundings, since Bulgaria, which was under diplomatic pressure from Germany, Italy and the Anglo-French allies, who were united by their unwillingness to allow the Soviet-Bulgarian rapprochement, preferred to remain neutral<sup>626</sup>. It became clear in Moscow that the project of creating a Soviet-Turkish-Bulgarian

alliance had failed, and on November 12, Molotov reported to Sofia that "perhaps the Bulgarians are right when they talk about the dangers for Bulgaria associated at the moment with the conclusion of a mutual assistance pact. Well, you can wait with that." Nevertheless, Kyoseivanov should have been told that Bulgaria could count on the support of the USSR, which, if necessary, "would be ready to provide them with effective assistance"<sup>627</sup>. At the end of November, during the Soviet-Bulgarian negotiations on the conclusion of an air agreement and on the purchase of Soviet aircraft by Bulgaria, the Soviet side again spoke about the possibility of creating a Soviet Air Force base in Bulgaria and about the right of the Red Army to pass through the Bulgarian

territory in the event of a possible conflict with Turkey. However, Sophia remained silent<sup>628</sup>. In the future, the USSR tried to strengthen its influence in Bulgaria through cultural ties used to promote socialism and Soviet-Bulgarian friendship. This work was also carried out through the BRP, which organized the movement of the population for rapprochement with the USSR. On January 5, 1940, the Soviet-Bulgarian agreement on trade and navigation was signed, which entered into force on February 13 after the exchange of instruments of ratification. For their part, England and France expanded trade with Bulgaria in November 1939, which revived Anglo-Francophile circles, but the economic attachment to Germany turned out to be stronger. Trying to prevent the strengthening of Soviet influence in Bulgaria, England in April 1940 spoke in favor of the transfer of Southern Dobruja to Bulgaria, subject to the conclusion of the Romanian-Bulgarian agreement on mutual assistance<sup>629</sup>.

The change in the political situation in Europe led to an adjustment in the foreign policy of Yugoslavia, which in the fall of 1939 was close to establishing diplomatic relations with the USSR, but fears of worsening relations with Italy, England and France and the Soviet-Finnish war led to the fact that this step was not done. By the spring of 1940, the Yugoslav leadership began to lean towards normalizing relations with the USSR, fearing an attack by Italy. On February 9, 1940, Soviet-Yugoslav economic negotiations began, culminating in the signing on May 11 of an agreement on trade and navigation, which entered into force on June 1, 1940. During the negotiations, Yugoslavia's interest in Soviet military supplies was revealed, and the Soviet side expressed its readiness to study this question. In May, Yugoslavia decided to sound out the USSR's position regarding support against a possible attack by Italy and Germany. Moscow expressed its willingness to discuss the issues of interest, but after the establishment of diplomatic relations, which took place on June 24, 1940<sup>630</sup> to Yugoslavia, seeking to impede Soviet-Yugoslav trade and possible further rapprochement with the USSR<sup>631</sup>.

Relations with Romania, the only Balkan country bordering the USSR, were overshadowed by the presence of the unresolved Bessarabia issue that arose in 1918, when Romania, in the conditions of the collapse of the Russian Empire, occupied and, contrary to its own promises, annexed Bessarabia. Naturally, neither the RSFSR, nor the Ukrainian SSR, nor later the USSR recognized this Romanian action. Moreover, Romania failed to achieve de jure recognition of the annexation of Bessarabia by the great powers, which, as a rule, limited themselves to de facto recognition. Difficulties in relations with the USSR forced Romania in 1921 to sign a defensive alliance with Poland against Moscow. For its part, the USSR repeatedly insisted on the return of the occupied territories, and when diplomatic relations were restored, it stipulated that it did not recognize Bessarabia as part of Romania. In 1935, the Romanian leadership was ready to sign even an agreement on mutual assistance with the USSR, provided that the USSR recognizes the border along the Dniester.

The position of Romania was complicated by the fact that Hungary and Bulgaria also had certain territorial claims to it. Therefore, the Romanian leadership relied on the support of England and France<sup>632</sup>. However, as contradictions between England and France, on the one hand, and Germany and Italy, on the other, grew, Romania, like most small European countries, began to pursue a policy of balancing between them. On March 23, 1939, the Romanian-German economic agreement was signed, which expanded the German economic presence in Romania. Trying to keep Romania from rapprochement with Germany, on April 13, 1939, England and France gave her guarantees. The outbreak of war in Europe, Germany's and France's successes in Poland and the inactivity of independence<sup>633</sup> of England increased Romania's desire to distance herself from them, and on September 8 she declared her neutrality. The entry of the Red Army into Poland led to the fact that Bucharest, contrary to the current Polish-Romanian treaty, declared on September 18 its



neutrality in the ongoing events and intensified the search for an ally against Moscow among the great powers. To do this, the Romanian leadership constantly reminded all interested parties that on the Dniester it was protecting not only itself, but the entire European civilization from Bolshevism. But since both England and France and Germany and Italy took an evasive position, the Romanian leadership continued its policy of balancing. Since October 1939, the idea of creating a

bloc of neutral states in the Balkans under the auspices of Italy began to be discussed. Britain and France viewed this initiative as an opportunity to maintain the status quo in Southeastern Europe, to prevent Germany and the USSR from gaining influence there, and to try to win Italy over to their side. In Moscow, this idea was treated with discontent, and in Berlin more calmly, since they expected to use the possible unification in their own interests. Romania took an active part in these negotiations, interested in the neutralization of Hungary, the USSR and Bulgaria. Although in October 1939 Romania managed to improve relations with Hungary somewhat, on November 21 Budapest announced that it would not participate in the bloc of neutrals until the disputes with Romania were completely resolved. The Bulgarian leadership made a similar statement. After the conclusion of the Anglo-French-Turkish treaty, Italy refused to participate in the bloc, and Germany, through diplomatic channels, notified the Balkan countries of the undesirability of their participation in this undertaking. In addition, the revived contradictions in the Balkans did not allow reaching an agreement, and by December the idea of the bloc was completely buried. Analyzing the situation in the

Balkans, the apparatus of the ECCI prepared for September 28, 1939, a note "The Imperialist War and the Balkans", which noted that both belligerent groups would seek to draw the neutral Balkan countries into the war that had begun. Under these conditions, the tasks of the Communist parties in the Balkans were to "fight against the imperialist war, against intervention in the war, against warmongers", which, in the then Soviet terminology, were England and France, which, from Moscow's point of view, represented the main obstacle to the strengthening of Soviet influence in South Eastern Europe. In their work, the communists were supposed to expose the policy of the ruling circles of the Balkan countries, fight for the friendship of the Balkan peoples and "with all their might strive to establish and strengthen friendly ties with the great Soviet Union and unite the Balkan countries around the Soviet Union. By this they will also help to limit the theater of war and rapid liquidation of the latter. The communist parties should take into account the aggravation of social problems and explain to the working people their revolutionary tasks. "Popularizing the grandiose experience of the USSR, they should indicate to the working people that only the overthrow of the capitalist governments, only the establishment of a workers' and peasants' government and joining the Soviet Union on the basis of equality and reciprocity, only the implementation of socialism will ensure national equality, a free and happy life for the working people of the Balkan countries"636 Attention The Romanian leadership was

attracted by an article by B. Stefanov in the magazine "Communist International", which stated that England and France were striving to draw Romania, which oppresses national minorities, into a war, but "the interests of the peoples of Romania, their peaceful and free development and a better future are impossible without the immediate conclusion of a pact on mutual assistance with the USSR, similar to the agreements between the Soviet Union and the Baltic states"637. Romania immediately assured the USSR that it was not going to violate its neutrality and was taking care of its national minorities638. At the same time, the Romanian leadership intensified the search for an ally against Moscow, which was facilitated by the beginning of the Soviet-Finnish war. On November 3, Romania again tried to find out from England and France whether their guarantees extended to Bessarabia, blackmailing them with the possibility of rapprochement with Germany639.

On December 14, England declared that the guarantees would apply to Bessarabia if Turkey immediately helped Romania and if Italy did not interfere

this help. In this case, the new situation will be "considered" in conjunction with the French government in order to determine the contribution that England and France are able to "make in defense of Rumania". France joined this response. On the same day, Romania raised the rate of the German mark to the Romanian leu by 15%, notifying Germany that it was waiting for her help against the USSR, as it was doing this contrary to the opinion of England and France. At the same time, on December 15, Romania asked England to keep her answer secret, since its disclosure could push the USSR to a violent solution to the Bessarabian issue. Romania's attempts to get guaranteed support against the USSR from its neighbors also did not bring results. The allies in the Balkan Entente were not interested in getting involved in the Soviet-Romanian conflict. Hungary and Bulgaria sought to realize their own territorial claims against Romania. Italy expected to continue rapprochement with Hungary and limited itself to general promises. In response to constant inquiries from the Romanian leadership about the possibility of Soviet aggression, Germany, seeking to stabilize oil prices, on February 8, 1940, replied that the situation in Romania did not bother her, since she did not foresee any Russian aggression<sup>640</sup>.

March 29, 1940 V.M. Molotov at a session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR stated that "we do not have a non-aggression pact with Romania. This is due to the presence of an unresolved controversial issue of Bessarabia, the seizure of which by Romania the Soviet Union never recognized, although it never raised the question of the return of Bessarabia by military means"<sup>641</sup>. This statement caused some concern in Romania. Already on March 30, the Romanian Prime Minister G. Tatarescu notified Germany of the need for further rearmament of the Romanian army and asked to influence Moscow so that it would not lay claim to Bessarabia. To this the answer was received that relations with Romania would depend on the fulfillment by her of her economic obligations to Germany. New Romanian requests showed that Berlin did not believe in the imminent possibility of a Soviet initiative in resolving the territorial issue. On April 9, 1940, the USSR sent a memorandum to Romania about 15 cases of shelling of Soviet territory from the Romanian side and the problem of mining bridges across the Dniester. The Romanian side, of course, denied its guilt and put forward counterclaims<sup>642</sup>. The spread of the war to Scandinavia and the passive position of England and France led to a decrease in their influence in the Balkans. Taking into account the developments in Europe, Carol II expressed on April 15, 1940, the opinion that Romania should join the "political line of Germany", and suggested that these intentions be guided by these intentions in the negotiations in Berlin. On April 19, 1940, the Romanian Crown Council spoke out against the voluntary cession of Bessarabia to the USSR, preferring to go to a military conflict.

The war in Western Europe required Romania to revise its foreign policy in favor of closer rapprochement with the only possible adversary of the USSR at that time - Germany. Already on May 28, 1940, a new trade agreement was signed between Romania and Germany, according to which it was supposed to increase oil supplies to Berlin by 30% in exchange for providing the Romanian army with modern weapons. The Romanian leadership began to persistently offer Germany cooperation in any field at its request. On June 1, 1940, new Romanian inquiries about Germany's actions in the event of "aggression by Soviet Russia" were answered that Germany was not interested in the problem of Bessarabia - this expand trade, but to was a matter. On the same day, Romania proposed to the USSR to Romania itself<sup>644</sup>. the Soviet side did not support this proposal. At the same time, an incident with a Soviet aircraft that had flown into Romanian airspace at 62 km was settled. <sup>645</sup> . tomorrow their relations will be stronger and require the rapid organization of this cooperation, which presupposes a politically and economically strong Romania, for only such a Romania will guarantee that it will be able to fulfill its mission of guard on the Dniester and at the mouth of the Danube"<sup>646</sup>. However, Berlin was in no hurry to respond.

From April 1940, the transfer of Soviet troops from the Finnish front to the places of permanent deployment began. At the same time, the Kyiv Special (KOVO), Odessa (OdVO) and Transcaucasian Military Districts (ZakVO) were strengthened. These redeployments were noticed by German diplomats in Moscow, which was reported on May 21, 1940 on May 11-14 by the Berlin647. operational department of the KOVO headquarters ordered the military topographic department to begin a set of mobilization sets of maps of the border zone of Romania648. On May 25, the German ambassador in Moscow, Count F.V. von Schulenburg turned to Molotov for clarification of the rumors about the concentration of Soviet troops on the border with Romania. "Molotov replied that all these rumors were groundless," Schulenburg reported to Berlin. There is no doubt, perhaps, that the Soviet troops in the southern part of Russia, in the Crimea and the Caucasus are being strengthened, "but these measures do not go beyond defensive649. The expansion of the war in Western Europe in May-June 1940 allowed the USSR to intensify its policy towards the Baltic states and

Romania. Unfortunately, the vast majority of documents on the preparation and implementation of the Bessarabian campaign of the Red Army is still secret, so it is impossible to comprehensively investigate these problems. However, the available materials still allow us to consider these events in

more detail. Specific Soviet military preparations for resolving the Bessarabian issue began on June 9, 1940, when the Military Councils of the KOVO and OdVO received directives from the People's Commissar of Defense OU / 583 and OU / 584, according to which they were tasked with bringing the troops into a state of combat readiness in peacetime states without raising assigned staff, concentrate them on the border with Romania and prepare an operation to return Bessarabia. To manage the operation on the basis of the KOVO Directorate, the Southern Front Directorate was created (commander - General of the Army G.K. Zhukov, member of the Military Council - Corps Commissar V.N. Borisov, chief of staff, Lieutenant General N.F. Vatutin), which included 5- yu (commander for the duration of the operation - Lieutenant General V.F. Gerasimenko), 12th (commander Major General F.A. Parusinov) KOVO Army and 9th Army (commander Lieutenant General I.V. Boldin), formed from the OdVO troops.

On June 13, from 13.20 to 14.30, a meeting of the top military-political leadership was held in the Kremlin, which was attended by Stalin, Molotov, People's Commissar of Defense Marshal S.K. Timoshenko, Chief of the General Staff Marshal B.M. Shaposhnikov, his deputy lieutenant general I.V. Smorodinov, head of the Political Directorate, army commissar 1st rank L.Z. Mekhlis, commanders of the troops and members of the Military Councils of the KOVO - General of the Army G.K. Zhukov, Corps Commissar V.N. Borisov and OdVO - Lieutenant General I.V. Boldin and Corps Commissar A.F. Kolobyakov, People's Commissar of the Navy Admiral N.G. Kuznetsov, Chief of the Main Naval Staff Admiral L.M. Galler and the commander of the Black Sea Fleet, Rear Admiral F.S. October 650. Unfortunately, the materials of this meeting are still secret, but it is quite obvious that it was about the preparation of an operation against Romania. In particular, the issue of creating an operational unit of the Black Sea Fleet on the Danube River - the Danube Flotilla, the creation of which began four days later, was resolved. By June 17, the Military Council of the Southern

Front developed a plan of operation, which was submitted on June 22 for approval by the People's Commissar of Defense. On June 19, special classes were held in Proskurov with the Military Councils of the armies and corps commanders in order to familiarize them with the nature and plan of the operation. Instructions were given on the specifics of the combat training of troops and rear services for the upcoming operation. On June 22-23, the Military Councils of the armies worked on the ground with the commanders of corps and divisions on the issues of occupying the starting position, organizing the upcoming offensive, interaction of military branches, command and control, communications, rear arrangements and actions for the next stage of the operation. With the rest of the command staff, these issues were worked out the day before the start of the operation.

To fulfill the government task, two variants of the operation were developed. Initially, the operational plan provided for a situation where Romania would not go to

peaceful settlement of the territorial issue and full-scale military operations will be required. In this case, it was planned to deliver enveloping strikes by the troops of the 12th Army from the area north of Chernivtsi along the Prut River to Iasi and the 9th Army from the Tiraspol region south of Chisinau to Khushi in order to encircle the Romanian troops in the Balti region of Iasi. To complete the encirclement and disorganization of the enemy's rear, it was planned, in cooperation with the Air Force and the Cavalry Mechanized Group (KMG), to use the 201st, 204th and 214th airborne brigades, from which it was supposed to land 2,040 people in the Tirgu Frumos area. Landing from 120 TB-3 aircraft under the cover of 300 fighters was to be preceded by an air strike on airfields and enemy troops. On June 15, the Black Sea Fleet, brought to a state of combat readiness, received tasks to combat the Romanian fleet. Later, a second version of the operational plan was developed, which provided for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. In this case, the withdrawal of the Romanian troops to the Prut River was to be accompanied by a quick exit of the mobile Soviet units to the new border and control over the evacuation of Bessarabia. The troops were put on alert and on June 10 received

instructions for concentration, which began under the guise of a training campaign on June 11 and was supposed to end on June 24. However, this process encountered a number of difficulties. A serious problem for the troops was bringing them to combat readiness without calling up assigned staff, which required the redistribution of military personnel to form the necessary rear and auxiliary units. For this, almost 35 thousand soldiers were involved from combat units, poorly prepared to fulfill the new duties assigned to them. The lack of commanding staff of the rear specialties and medical personnel was made up for by their conscription from the reserve. 16 field hospitals, 6 departments of field evacuation points, 4 infectious diseases hospitals, 2 auto-sanitary, 5 auto-surgical detachments, 12 ambulance trains were formed, hospitals in Lvov, Tarnopol and Proskurov were prepared to receive the wounded. To support the combat operations of the troops, 34 various warehouses, 5 bakeries, 7 field mobile hospitals, 3 evacuation and 8 field veterinary infirmaries, 9 working companies were deployed. The lack of transport led to the fact that the troops that set out on the campaign were not able to immediately take the necessary weapons and equipment, which led to a delay in concentration, because it required several trips of the available vehicles. For replenishment in case of loss, there were 17 marching battalions assigned by the General Staff, 10 marching battalions formed in the KOVO and OdVO, 5 spare sapper companies and 225 tank crews. All these difficulties led to the fact that the troops did not have time to concentrate by June 24, and completed their

deployment only by June 27. The troops of the 12th Army, located in the Carpathians, were deployed to the southeast. The army headquarters was relocated from Stanislav to Kolomyia, where the 8th, 13th, 15th, 17th rifle corps and the Army cavalry group (commander Lieutenant General Ya.T. Cherevichenko) were subordinate to it, consisting of the 2nd and 4th - th caval corps. Part of the troops of the 5th army, deployed in Volhynia, was reassigned to the 6th and 12th armies. The headquarters of the 5th army was transferred from Lutsk to Dunaevtsy, where it united the 36th and 49th rifle corps. From the troops of the OdVO, replenished at the expense of the KOVO, KhVO and North Caucasian Military District, the 9th Army was deployed (headquarters in Grossulovo - now: Velikaya Mikhailovka) as part of the 7th, 35th, 37th, 55th rifle and 5th th cavalry corps. Part of the troops was transferred by rail, part - on foot. Moreover, certain difficulties arose during the rail transportation of troops, since there was no transportation plan. The order of the General Staff on transportation was received only at 18.30 on June 12, although the transportation was supposed to begin at 18.00 that day. The uncoordinated work of the Department of Military Communications and the NKPS led to the fact that instead of the required 709 echelons, the troops received about a third less. But, despite all these difficulties, by the beginning of the operation all the troops were brought up and deployed in

accordance with the plan 651 Table 19

Grouping of troops of the Southern Front on June 27, 1940.

The troops of the Southern Front included 32 rifle, 2 motorized rifle, 6 cavalry divisions, 11 tank and 3 airborne brigades, 14 corps artillery regiments, 16 artillery regiments of the RGK and 4 artillery divisions of high power. Total population grouping was up to 460 thousand people, up to 12 thousand guns and mortars, about 3 thousand tanks. The Front Air Force grouping united 21 fighter, 12 medium bomber, 4 long-range bomber, 4 light bomber, 4 heavy bomber air regiment and by June 24 had 2,160 aircraft<sup>652</sup>

June 21, 1940 Head of the Political Directorate of the Red Army Army Commissar 1 rank L.Z. Mekhlis sent to the Military Councils and heads of the Political Directorates of the KOVO and OdVO Directive No. 5285cc on political work during the Bessarabian campaign, in which the actions of the USSR were explained as follows: "In 1918, using civil war in the USSR and the intervention of the Anglo-French imperialists, Romania thieves seized Bessarabia from us. Our brothers live in Bessarabia in a terrifying poverty and drag out a miserable existence", which was confirmed by excerpts from the Romanian presses.

"The government of the royal dictatorship complements the economic oppression of the masses Bessarabia political and national. Ethnographically, Bessarabia has no relationship with Romania. No more than 9.1% of Romanians live there. The rest of the population is Russians, Ukrainians and Moldovans. Russians, Ukrainians and Moldovans under pain of trial it is forbidden to speak in their native language. Their cultural institutions and schools crushed.

The Rumanian capitalists and landlords subject the Russian and Ukrainian population in Bessarabia. They beat and destroy everyone who is in some least sympathetic to the Soviet Union.

The desire of the Bessarabian population to free themselves from the Romanian oppression is reflected in mass revolutionary uprisings and uprisings, which for all 22 years occupations of Bessarabia were brutally suppressed. So, were drowned in the blood of workers Khotyn (1919) and Tatarbunar (1924) armed uprisings. Bessarabian prisons crowded with political prisoners and peasants.

The Soviet Union never recognized the capture of Bessarabia by boyar Romania. 5th of March 1918 Romania, according to the Iasi peace treaty with Soviet Russia, promised in a 2-month term to clear Bessarabia of its troops and return it to our homeland. This treaty Romania, with the support of England and France, did not comply.

The time has come to wrest our land from the thieves' hands of boyar Romania, to rescue our land from Romanian captivity of our brothers and citizens. Stolen Bessarabia must be and will be returned to the bosom of her motherland to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

In order to prepare troops for the upcoming military operations, the Political Directorate Red Army" obligated the political agencies "to explain to all personnel the external the policy of the USSR, to expose Romania, which captured our Soviet Union by thieves earth. We are going to release our half-brothers Ukrainians, Russians and Moldovans from under the yoke of boyar Romania and save them from the threat of ruin and extinction. rescuing Soviet Bessarabia from under the yoke of the Rumanian capitalists and landowners, we defend and we are strengthening our southern and southwestern borders. (Make it the night before speeches) ... "It

was required" by all party political work to create a fighting upsurge in units, offensive impulse, ensuring the rapid defeat of the enemy (capturing his main forces and the cleansing of Bessarabia) ... The task of the Red Army, as indicated above, is to return Bessarabia to our Motherland and rescue our half-brothers and citizens. On its banners the Red Army carries the freedom of the working people from exploitation and national oppression. The workers will be liberated from the capitalist slavery, the unemployed will get a job, farm laborers, landless and landless peasants

will receive the lands of the Romanian landlords, taxes will be lightened and temporarily completely removed. An end will be put to the wild system of "Romanization" of Russians, Ukrainians and Moldovans. The population of Bessarabia will have the opportunity to build their own culture, national in form and socialist in content. Bessarabia will become a Soviet outpost on our southern and southwestern border... Preparations for the offensive must be carried out in the strictest secrecy. Resolutely deal with talkativeness. Everyone should know only what is necessary for him and within the prescribed time ... The texts of the leaflets to the soldiers and the population will be given by the Political Directorate of the Red Army. They will have to be scattered throughout Bessarabia by planes on the first day of the offensive ... "

In order to prevent possible looting and "baroholism", it was required "to instruct the personnel on their attitude towards the civilian population" and to prohibit "all military personnel from making any personal purchases in stores, regardless of their faces." Measures were envisaged for work among the

enemy troops, the main goal of which "is to quickly disintegrate his army, demoralize the rear and, thus, help the command of the Red Army achieve complete victory in the shortest possible time and with the least sacrifice." It was necessary "to show on concrete facts the plight of the working masses, especially farm laborers and small landowners, in Bessarabia, terror and violence in the rear by the police-gendarmerie apparatus ... To explain to the Romanian soldiers the injustice and hopelessness of the war against the USSR and the tasks of the Red Army. To expose the arbitrariness of officers at the front, capitalists, landlords, officials and policemen in the rear... To promote the defection of soldiers to our side and anti-war sentiments in the enemy army To widely publicize every fact of the defeat of the Romanian troops To show the happy and joyful life of workers and peasants in the USSR To explain how workers and peasants of the USSR govern the state without capitalists and landowners. To counterpose to this the powerless position of the workers and peasants in Rumania. To show the fundamental difference between tsarist Russia, a prison of peoples, and the Soviet Union, a fraternal union of liberated peoples... The political workers are taking a serious test. The trust placed in them by the party, the government, Comrade STALIN"<sup>653</sup> Political work in accordance with this directive, received by the troops on June 25, led not only to a "correct" understanding of events by the personnel, but also gave rise to a number of negative moods. So, for example,

Sokolovsky, a Red Army soldier of the 36th tank brigade, declared: "Again war, again we are extending a fraternal helping hand. And we ourselves say that we do not have an imperialist predatory policy." According to the Red Army soldier of the 335th howitzer artillery regiment of the RGK Fedotov, "we only talk against the war, but they themselves are fighting, as a result of which up to 200 thousand people have already died and we are still preparing a war to kill people, this is criminal"<sup>654</sup>. Naturally, the political agencies were especially active in combating such sentiments. During the period of concentration of troops, there were facts of desertion of the Red Army. So, only in the troops of the 12th Army from June 11 to June 28, 138 deserters were detained, 71 of whom were convicted (including 5 to be shot). By June 26, the political agencies developed an action plan for the first days of the operation<sup>655</sup>. To influence the enemy troops, 6 million leaflets were printed, which on June 27 were loaded onto aircraft and prepared for use<sup>656</sup>.

The military preparation of the solution of the Bessarabian question was accompanied by corresponding diplomatic activity of Moscow. On June 21, 1940, the Soviet plenipotentiary in Bucharest, in a conversation with the Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, in response to the latter's remark about ways to improve Soviet-Romanian relations, noted that, first of all, unresolved political issues should be settled, in particular the question of Bessarabia. However, the Romanian side did not develop this topic. The entry of Italy into the war on June 10, 1940 increased its interest in demonstrating cooperation with the USSR, which was also interested in determining the position of Germany and Italy in relation to the Balkans and

possibility of solving the Bessarabian issue. On June 20, the Italian ambassador in Moscow, A. Rosso, told Molotov about the desire of the Italian government to develop relations with the USSR in the spirit of the Treaty of Friendship, Non-Aggression and Neutrality of 1933 and to help resolve disputes in the Balkans by peaceful means. In response, Molotov declared that the USSR was in favor of settling the Bessarabian question "by peaceful means, unless, of course, it drags on endlessly." This conversation was the first hint for the German embassy in Moscow about the possible actions of the USSR in relation to

Romania<sup>658</sup>. In a conversation with Molotov on June 23, Schulenburg confirmed that, according to Germany, the "consultation agreement" under the non-aggression pact "applies to the Balkans." Having found out that Germany was confirming the last year's agreement on Bessarabia, Molotov informed Schulenburg of the decision of the Soviet government on the Bessarabia question. "The Soviet Union would like to resolve the issue peacefully, but Romania did not respond" to the Soviet statement of March 29, 1940. Now the Soviet government "wants to raise this issue again before Romania in the near future. Bukovina, as an area inhabited by Ukrainians, is also included in solution of the Bessarabian question. Romania will act sensibly if it gives up Bessarabia and Bukovina by peaceful means... If Romania does not agree to a peaceful solution of the Bessarabian question, the Soviet Union will solve it by armed force. The Soviet Union has long and patiently waited for the solution for Germany of this question, but now further Schulenburg pointed out the importance economic supplies from Rumania and asked the Soviet government not to take any decisive steps until Germany's position was outlined. Molotov once again emphasized the urgency of the issue and stated that the Soviet government expected support from Germany. For its part, the USSR will ensure the protection of Germany's economic interests in Romania.

In the evening of June 23, Molotov informed Schulenburg that "the Soviet government will await a response from the German government until June 25 inclusive."<sup>661</sup> disinterest in Bessarabia, regarding the economic interest of Germany in the South-East of Europe, the Soviet government was duly. On the same day, the views of the Secretary of State were notified to Ribbentrop. German Foreign Ministry E. von Weizsacker, who proposed to make efforts to peacefully resolve the issue in the sense of satisfying the claims of the USSR, Promise to demanding in return to satisfy the following wishes: oil production areas; 2. respect the rights and interests of the citizens of the Reich; 3. Promise to protect the interests of the Volksdeutsche in a way that will be established later; 4. In the event of a military clash, do not bomb the oil production areas. Romania, on the other hand, needs to be indicated that Germany will support the Soviet demands.

On June 25, the Soviet side undertook a more specific diplomatic sounding in relation to Italy. In response to a previous inquiry from the Italian ambassador, Molotov told him that the USSR "had no claims against Hungary" and "considered Hungary's claims against Romania to be justified." "The USSR has good, good-neighbourly relations with Bulgaria. They have reason to become closer. Bulgaria's claims to Romania, as well as to Greece, are justified. The main claims of the USSR to Romania are known. The USSR would like to receive from Romania what is rightfully belongs to it, without the use of force, but the latter will become inevitable if Romania turns out to be intractable. As for other regions of Romania, the USSR takes into account the interests of Italy and Germany and on June 26, in a is ready to agree with them on this issue "<sup>664</sup>. conversation with the Soviet plenipotentiary, Rome, Italian Foreign Minister G. Ciano, referring to information about the intentions of the USSR "to resolve the issue of Bessarabia by military means," informed Moscow that Italy "fully recognizes the rights of the USSR to Bessarabia," but is interested in a peaceful solution to this issue. At the same time, the Italian side expressed readiness, together with Germany

"to advise Rumania to accept the Soviet proposals"<sup>665</sup>. On June 27, Moscow agreed to this Italian proposal<sup>666</sup>. At 21.00 on

June 25, Schulenburg informed Molotov of the following response from Berlin: "1. The German government fully recognizes the rights of the Soviet Union to Bessarabia and the timeliness of raising this issue before Romania. 2. Germany, having large economic interests in Romania, is extremely interested in resolving the Bessarabia issue peacefully and is ready to support the Soviet government on this path, exerting influence on Rumania for its part. 3. The question of Bukovina is new, and Germany believes that without raising this question, a peaceful settlement of the question of Bessarabia would be greatly facilitated. 4. The German government, being interested in the numerous Germans living in Bessarabia and Bukovina, he hopes that the question of their resettlement will be resolved by the Soviet government in the spirit of the agreement on the resettlement of Germans from Volhynia. Germany expressed interest in preventing "Romania from turning into a theater of military operations"<sup>667</sup>. Molotov expressed gratitude to the German government for its understanding and support of the Soviet demands and stated that the USSR also wanted a peaceful solution to the issue; Germany's wishes regarding the Germans living there will be taken into account, as well as the economic interests of the Reich. On the issue of Bukovina, Molotov stated that it "is the last missing part of a united Ukraine and that for this reason the Soviet government attaches importance to the solution of this issue simultaneously with the Bessarabian"<sup>668</sup>, but, as Schulenburg noted, some change in Soviet requirements is quite possible.

On June 26, Molotov spoke again with Schulenburg and stated that Soviet demands "are limited to the northern part of Bukovina with the city of Chernivtsi", and added that the Soviet government expects German support for these demands. When Schulenburg noted that the issue would be resolved more easily if the USSR returned to Romania the gold reserves of the Romanian National Bank, taken to Moscow in 1915, Molotov replied that this was out of the question, since Romania had been exploiting Bessarabia for quite a long time. Regarding further actions, Molotov said that he would convey the demands of the USSR to the Romanian envoy in Moscow in the next few days and expected Germany's support in satisfying these demands if Romania did not want war.<sup>669</sup> Romania-

did not yet know that the fate of Bessarabia had already been practically decided. On June 25, the Romanian Prime Minister asked the German envoy in Bucharest if there was any answer to the Romanian statement of June 20. Having received information about the concentration of the Red Army on the Dniester, Tatarescu said that "the Romanian government and the king are determined to fight rather than just give in" if the USSR demands the transfer of Bessarabia. The same bellicose statements were heard on June 24-26 by American diplomats from their Romanian colleagues<sup>670</sup>. True, fears grew in Bucharest due to the fact that repeated alarming appeals to Berlin stumbled upon a wall of silence. A large grouping of Romanian troops was deployed on the Soviet-Romanian border. In the strip from Valya-Visheuliei to Sokiriana, the troops of the 3rd Army (headquarters - Roman) were located as part of the mechanized corps (1st, 4th mechanized brigades), 8th and 10th army corps (5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 29th, 34th, 35th Infantry and 2nd Cavalry Divisions). Along the river Prut from Sokiriana to the Black Sea, troops of the 4th Army (headquarters - Tekuch) were deployed as part of the 1st, 3rd, 4th and 11th army corps (2nd, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 21st, 25th, 27th, 31st, 32nd, 33rd, 37th Infantry, 3rd, 4th Cavalry Divisions). Both armies, which were part of the 1st Army Group, united 60% of the ground forces of Romania and numbered about 450 thousand.

June 26 at 22.00 Molotov handed over to the Romanian envoy G. Davidescu a note from the Soviet government. It stated that "in 1918, Romania, taking advantage of the military weakness of Russia, forcibly seized from the Soviet Union (Russia) part of its territory - Bessarabia ... The Soviet Union never put up with the fact of the forcible secession of Bessarabia, about which the government of the USSR repeatedly and openly declared before the whole world. Now that the military weakness of the USSR has receded into the past, and



the current international situation requires the quickest possible resolution ... of unresolved issues ... "the Soviet government suggested to Rumania:" 1. Return Bessarabia to the Soviet Union. 2. Transfer to the Soviet Union the northern part of Bukovina within the borders according to the attached map. "At the same time, Moscow expressed the hope that Romania "accepts the present proposal of the USSR and thus will make it possible to peacefully resolve the protracted conflict." The answer of the Romanian government was expected within June 27<sup>672</sup> the argument given in the note with references to the history of Bessarabia and the events of 1918, of course, did not find a response from Molotov, who noted that they "do not correspond to either historical development or the real situation." An attempt to extend the deadline for a response from Bucharest also failed. , since the Soviet government has already "waited 22 years" and therefore "hopes that the answer will be given without delay, and if it is positive, then the issue will be resolved peacefully" <sup>673</sup> .

On June 27, Molotov informed Schulenburg<sup>674</sup> of the steps taken, who tried to clarify "how to understand the demand of the Soviet government that the Romanian response should come today." To this he was explained that "the Soviet troops will cross the Romanian border tomorrow morning if the Romanian government does not give a positive answer to the Soviet demands today"<sup>675</sup>. Having received the Soviet note, the Romanian government turned to Italy, Germany and the allies in the Balkan Entente for support. In addition, Rome and Berlin were required to exert a restraining influence on Hungary and Bulgaria. On the morning of June 27, mobilization was announced in Romania, and at 10.30 Ribbentrop handed over to Bucharest an instruction to his ambassador, in which he proposed to declare to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania: "The Soviet government informed us that it demands from the Romanian government the transfer of Bessarabia and the northern part of Bukovina. In order to avoid a war between Romania and the Soviet Union, we can only give the Romanian government of the government in to the demands of the Soviet to advise "<sup>676</sup>. Similar responses were received from Italy and the countries of the Balkan Entente. Discussing options for action in this situation, Bucharest decided to try to drag out time by entering into negotiations with the

USSR. At 11:00 p.m. on June 27, a response was received in Moscow from Bucharest, in which the Romanian government stated "that it was ready to begin immediately, in the broadest sense, a friendly discussion, with common consent, of all proposals coming from the Soviet government." Romania asked to "indicate the place and date" of future negotiations, the delegates for which from the Romanian side will be appointed after a response from Moscow. The note expressed the hope that "negotiations ... will result in the creation of strong relations, good accord and friendship between the USSR and Romania." After listening to such a streamlined answer, Molotov said that "he does not see in the statement made agreement to the Soviet proposals and that he believes that tomorrow the Soviet troops should enter the territory of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina." Davidescu assured him that the Romanian government agreed with the Soviet proposals, but should agree on "the procedure and legal forms for the implementation of these measures." However, all attempts by the Romanian diplomat to agree on future negotiations were unsuccessful, since, as Molotov stated, "now we are talking about political issues, not technical ones." The Soviet side offered to immediately sign an agreement that on June 28 "Soviet troops should occupy certain points" and occupy the rest of the territory in 3-4 days. Accordingly, Romania must guarantee the safety of enterprises, railways, airfields, telegraph and telephone, state and private property, and later "the Soviet-Romanian commission will be able to agree on the details of the implementation of the planned measures"<sup>677</sup>.

Davidescu refused to sign the agreement, citing his lack of necessary authority. Then, a little later, a new Soviet note was handed to him, which noted the uncertainty of the Romanian government's response, "because it does not say directly that it accepts the proposals of the Soviet government for an immediate

transfer to the Soviet Union of Bessarabia and the northern part of Bukovina". However, taking into account the explanations of the Romanian envoy in Moscow, the Soviet government proposed: "1. Within 4 days, starting from 2 pm Moscow time on June 28, to clear the territory of Bessarabia and the northern part of Bukovina to the Romanian troops. 2. Soviet troops for the same period to occupy the territory of Bessarabia and the northern part of Bukovina. 3. During June 28, Soviet troops will occupy the points: Chernivtsi, Chisinau, Akkerman. 4. The Royal Government of Romania assume responsibility for the safety and prevention of damage to railways, locomotive and wagon fleet, bridges, warehouses, airfields, industrial enterprises, power plants, telegraph. 5. Appoint a commission of representatives of the "parties" to settle disputed issues regarding the evacuation of Romanian troops and institutions. Romania's response was to arrive in Moscow no later than 12:00 on June 28<sup>678</sup>

Bucharest continued to discuss the current situation, not excluding the possibility of military resistance from the USSR. However, late in the evening of June 27, having realistically assessed the military capabilities of Romania and fearing social upheavals in the event of a war with the USSR, the Crown Council decided by 27 votes against 11 to agree to the cession of the territories demanded by the USSR. As Tatarescu later declared in parliament, "we decided to retreat from Bessarabia and Upper Bukovina in order to save the Romanian state today and save the future of the Romanian nation from danger"<sup>679</sup>. At 1100 hours on June 28, the Romanian government declared that, in an effort to "avoid serious consequences that would entail the use of force and the opening of hostilities in this part of Europe, it sees itself obliged to accept the conditions of evacuation provided for in the Soviet response." At the same time, Romania asked for an extension of the evacuation period, "taking into account that the evacuation of the territory would be extremely difficult to carry out within four days due to rains and floods that spoiled the communications." A mixed Soviet-Romanian commission could deal with this issue<sup>680</sup>. At the same time, as M.D. Ereshchenko, Romania formally agreed not to the return of the territory to the Soviet Union, but only to the "evacuation of the Romanian troops" from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina<sup>681</sup>, which was later <sup>what in</sup> used by Bucharest to justify its claims to these territories. Since the Soviet-Romanian conflict was

resolved peacefully, the troops of the Southern Front were ordered to carry out the operation according to the second version of the plan. Only a part of the concentrated troops were introduced into Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina: from the 12th Army - the 4th Cavalry Corps with the 23rd Tank Brigade, the 2nd Cavalry Corps with the 5th Tank Brigade (1st echelon), 60th, 58 1st, 131st rifle and 192nd mountain rifle divisions (2nd echelon). From the 5th Army - the 36th, 49th tank brigades (1st echelon), the 80th, 169th rifle divisions (2nd echelon). From the 9th Army - the 5th Cavalry Corps, the 4th Tank Brigade, the 15th Motorized Rifle Division (1st echelon), the 95th, 25th, 74th, 140th Rifle Divisions (2nd echelon). In addition, it was planned to use the 201st and 204th airborne brigades of front-line subordination. All other troops remained on the old border in full combat readiness<sup>682</sup>. On June 28, the troops received instructions from the Political Directorate of the Red Army, which demanded that all personnel be explained that, "thanks to the wise Stalinist foreign policy, we saved the working people of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina from a bloody war and resolved the issue of return of Bessarabia to the mighty family, the Troops were ordered means"<sup>683</sup>. conduct active political work to remain vigilant and the Soviet Union by peaceful among the local population. At 14.00 on June 28, the

troops of the Southern Front crossed the old border and on the same day occupied Chernivtsi, Khotin, Balti, Chisinau and Akkerman. The Soviet troops advanced almost after the rearguards of the Romanian troops, and the mobile formations overtook them and reached the Prut River before them. The crossing of the lower reaches of the Dniester by the troops of the 9th Army took too much time, since the pontoons turned out to be poorly trained. The delay in the advance of troops in the southwestern regions of Bessarabia and received

information about the looting of the evacuated Romanian units led to the fact that it was decided to land troops in the southern part of Bessarabia. On June 29, 1,372 soldiers of the 204th airborne brigade were parachuted in the Bolgrad area. At 04:55 am on June 30, an order was given to transfer units of the 201st Airborne Brigade to Izmail, and at 09:35-12:15 44 TB-3 aircraft with 809 paratroopers on board headed for the target. Initially, it was assumed that the planes would land at the Izmail airfield, but it turned out that the airfield was too small for such large aircraft, and after landing 12 TB-3s, it was decided to drop the rest of the troops by parachute. In total, 240 people were landed and 509 people were parachuted, and out of three aircraft, the landing was not made. By evening, the paratroopers occupied Izmail and guarded the border. During these landing operations, 3 people died, 7 received fractures, and 25 received minor injuries. According to the command of the Southern Front, the landings "fully justified themselves and forced the Romanian units to reckon with the agreement"<sup>684</sup>

Despite such a high assessment of the actions of the paratroopers, the command of the airborne brigades was quite critical of the operation. As reported in his report dated July 19, 1940 to the Military Council of the KOVO and the Combat Training Directorate of the Red Army, the commander of the 204th brigade, Colonel Gubarevich, on June 28, 1940, the brigade was put on alert and at 20.00 through the commander of the 29th heavy bomber air brigade received combat mission, since the headquarters of the front entrusted all the training to the headquarters of the Air Force. From 04:00 on the morning of June 29, the personnel of the brigade were withdrawn to the aircraft and stayed there until departure, having one ammunition load of cartridges and two daily rations of canned meat and vegetables, concentrates and crackers. The air force command did not actually prepare the operation: no reconnaissance of the drop site was carried out, there was no organization of communications, and the preparation of air regiments for landing turned out to be low, which led to the dispersion of the landing force over a large area. At 0800-0930, 99 TB-3 planes took off, and at 1230-1430 they landed 10 km north of Bolgrad. The brigade was fully concentrated by 16.30, but even before that, two battalions were sent to Bolgrad and to the Trojanov Val station, which they occupied at 18.30. At 18.15, an order was received from the Southern Front to occupy the cities of Reni and Cahul, located 40-50 km from the landing site. On the night of June 30, a company of paratroopers in vehicles occupied Reni, where a shootout with the Romanians took place. Early in the morning on July 1, Cahul was occupied. The appearance of the paratroopers stopped the robbery of the population by the Romanian soldiers. By July 4, units of the 25th Infantry Division approached. The 204th brigade was withdrawn to Bolgrad, from there it was transferred by rail to Bender, where it remained until July 16<sup>685</sup>

Head of the Combat Training Directorate of the Red Army, Lieutenant General V.N. Kurdyumov, reporting on July 24, 1940 to the People's Commissar of Defense on the course of the airborne operation in Bessarabia, noted that it was "executed exceptionally badly", since "there was no any preparation for the operation."

"The release of the 204th brigade on June 29," we read in its memorandum, "was made with a delay of 1 hour 30 minutes due to the untimely order to take off. The departure of the 201st brigade instead of 9.00 was made at 14.00 on June 30 for the same reason, and also because of the lack of fuel tankers at the Skomorokha airfield. The airborne assault was carried out in a peaceful way - without military aviation cover and preliminary reconnaissance of the drop area (landing). this brigades were dispersed over an area of 10 x 10 km, and the collection after landing was carried out within two hours, which is unacceptable for a combat situation. departure of 50 people who were unable to jump (sickness).The air brigades were thrown out and landed without any tasks and instructions on the nature of the actions. The drop points for the command of the airborne brigades became known only from the commanders of the flying units. None from the front

there was no leadership of the brigades, and only 5 hours after the drop, a representative of the front arrived in the 204th brigade with a very general order to occupy new points, but again without mentioning the nature of the actions of the brigades. When using brigades,

the degree of their condition and readiness was not taken into account. "Thus, the 204th brigade, which had 42.2%" of the people who arrived at the brigade in June and hastily made 1-3 jumps, was dropped by parachute in difficult conditions with a wind of 8-9 m / s. At the same time, the 214th brigade, best prepared for parachute drop, was not used at all. The time to prepare for the operation from the moment the order was received to the departure was estimated at 4 hours, and then due to the deprivation of the necessary rest of the brigade personnel. Replenishment of the abandoned brigades with firearms and food by air, as well as the evacuation of the wounded and sick, was not provided. After many requests, only on July 5 (five days later) an ambulance aircraft arrived at the location of the 204th brigade. The listed shortcomings in a combat situation would inevitably lead to the failure of the airborne operation and to the needless death of people and aircraft "686

On June 29, the troops of the first echelons reached the Prut River, where they occupied crossings and established a procedure for inspecting the departing Romanian units in order to seize the captured property of the local population. These measures, along with active political propaganda, in which S.K. Timoshenko, G.K. Zhukov, L.Z. Mekhlis and First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (b) U.N.S. Khrushchev, supported the enthusiasm of the population in connection with the arrival of the Red Army. During the Bessarabian operation, a train was used to publish newspapers and leaflets in Russian, Ukrainian and Romanian.

printing house, the total output of which amounted to 2,120 thousand copies. Newspapers published in the districts made it possible to widely cover the local population with the press, for whose entertainment cinema installations and theaters of the Ukrainian SSR and KOVO were involved. The total volume of printed books, brochures, flyers, maps, etc. amounted to 2,539 thousand copies<sup>687</sup>. In the course of the occupation of Bessarabia by the Soviet troops, there were facts of "junk stuff" - purchases by Soviet military personnel of various manufactured goods, which was actively suppressed by the command and political agencies.

By the end of July 1, the new border was completely occupied by troops, and from 14.00 on July 3, the border was closed, and the Romanian military personnel who did not have time to cross were disarmed and detained. Thus, "the troops of the Southern Front fulfilled the task assigned to them and provided our Government with the opportunity to peacefully liberate BESSARABIA and BUKOVINA and, by their actions, quickly secured them for the USSR ... The border was securely secured. The main forces began normal combat training in the areas they occupied"<sup>688</sup>. From July 5, 1940, the troops were transferred to a state of normal readiness in peacetime, and from July 8 they began to disperse to their places of permanent deployment. On July 7, the administration of the Southern Front was disbanded, and on July 10, the administration of the 9th Army<sup>689</sup>. The absence of hostilities did not rule out minor clashes between the Romanian and Soviet troops, in which the losses of the Red Army, as well as from accidents for the period from June 11 to July 6, 1940, according to incomplete data, amounted to 119 people (killed - 29, suicides 12, wounded - 69, self-mutilation - 6, drowned - 3)<sup>690</sup>.

During the Bessarabian campaign, Soviet troops captured significant trophies. By July 14, 1940, they numbered: 52,796 rifles and carbines, 4,480 pistols, 1 machine gun, 1,071 light machine guns, 326 machine guns, 149 small -caliber rifles, 1,080 hunting rifles, 6 anti -aircraft machine guns, 40 mortars, 258 guns, 258 guns, 258 guns, 258 guns, 258 guns, 258 guns, 258 guns, 258 guns, 258 guns, 258 guns, 258 guns, 258 guns, 258 guns, 258 guns, 258 guns, 258 guns, 258 guns, 258 guns, 258 guns, 14,296,183 rounds of ammunition, 54,309 grenades, 1,512 anti-tank mines, 16,907 mortar mines, 79,320 shells, 15 trucks, 38 cars, 2 buses, 3 tractors, 4 motorcycles with a sidecar, 17 bicycles, 125 telephones, 1 radio set , 117.5 km of telephone cable, 21,064 gas masks, 545.2 tons of fuel and lubricants, sanitary, engineering, transport and clothing equipment, 141 locomotives, 1,866 covered wagons, 325 gondola wagons, 45 platforms, 19 tanks, 31 class wagons, 2 luggage wagon, 10,137.8 tons of food, 36 barrels of oil, 98,600

boxes of canned food, 3.5 wagons of wine, 103 wagons of hay, 1,176 horses, 60 cattle, 220 sheep, 70 pigs<sup>691</sup>. The USSR received a territory of 50,762 sq. km with a population of 3,776 thousand people, and on August 2, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR adopted a law on the formation of the Moldavian SSR and the inclusion of Northern Bukovina and three districts of Bessarabia on the Black Sea coast into the Ukrainian SSR.

The transfer of the territories it required to the USSR did not end the settlement of disputed issues. On June 29, 1940, the Soviet-Romanian government commission began its work in Odessa to resolve disputes and evacuate Romanian troops and institutions from Bessarabia and the northern part of Bukovina (from the Soviet side, the chairman was Lieutenant General D.T. Kozlov, from the Romanian side - Divisional General A. Aldya). The Soviet side demanded that Romania return the stolen railway rolling stock and hand over the technical and cartographic documentation of the new Soviet territories. On July 31, 1940, a Soviet-Romanian agreement was signed on the transfer of 175 locomotives and 4,375 wagons to the USSR by August 25. <sup>692</sup> For its part, the USSR refused to consider Romania's counterclaims for military property left in Bessarabia, based on the statement of the Romanian delegation that the property was stolen by deserters. True, later (September 20 - November 15, 1940), most of the military trophies of the Red Army were returned to Romania, which received 51,644 rifles, 1,080 light and 130 machine guns, 4,648 pistols, 36 mortars, 157 guns, 16,270,453 cartridges, 20,878 grenades, 115,138 shells<sup>693</sup>. On September 2, the Soviet-Romanian technical commission began work to determine the losses and

destruction inflicted by the Romanian army during the withdrawal from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina (from the Soviet side, Colonel V.V. witnesses or on site. Members of the commission visited Chisinau, Reni, Balti, Chernivtsi and Lipcani. During the negotiations, the Soviet side demanded from Romania compensation for damages and payment for all kinds of financial documents for May-June 1940, totaling 2,601 million lei. Field checks showed that the claims of the Soviet side were, as a rule, exaggerated and in many cases were not confirmed. The Romanian side, as a rule, pointed to the overestimation or unfoundedness of Soviet claims and put forward its own counterclaims. On November 22, 1940, the technical commission ceased its work. During the negotiations, an agreement was reached on the amount of damage caused to the inhabitants of Bessarabia, in 265,703,807 lei, but on November 28, 1940, Romania refused to compensate it, referring to the fact that the USSR did not demand this in its notes<sup>694</sup> The defeat of France led to a violation of the established system the influence of the great powers and intensified the struggle for the Balkans. The USSR was the first to use the new situation, achieving a resolution of the Bessarabian issue. Hungary and Bulgaria decided that the time had come to exercise their own

territorial claims against Romania. Fearing its neighbors, the Romanian leadership decided to accelerate the rapprochement with Germany, which was supposed to help avoid new territorial concessions. On July 1, Romania refused the Anglo-French guarantees of 1939 and the next day asked Germany to expand cooperation and send a military mission to the country. However, Berlin was in no hurry to respond to the Romanian proposals, since Germany was faced with the task of subordinating all the Balkans to its influence, and for this it was necessary to use the contradictions of the countries of the region. In July 1940, Germany refused the Romanian proposal to guarantee the borders of Romania and the role of an arbiter in the settlement of territorial issues, demanding that she negotiate with her neighbors, taking into account their requirements. Italy has taken the same position. Under these conditions, in August 1940, Romania was forced to enter into direct negotiations with Hungary and Bulgaria<sup>695</sup>. In July 1940, Germany, Italy and the USSR, seeking to strengthen, and England, trying to maintain its influence in the region, supported the territorial claims

Bulgaria to Romania. On August 19-21, Romanian-Bulgarian negotiations took place in the city of Craiova, as a result of which, on September 7, an agreement was signed on the transfer of the territory of Southern Dobruja with an area of 5,672 square meters to Bulgaria. km and a population of 386,231 people. On September 21, the agreement was ratified, and Bulgarian troops entered South Dobruja, and by October 2, the whole procedure was completed<sup>696</sup>. For its part, Hungary informed Berlin as early as June 28 that in the current situation it did not exclude the possibility of resolving the issue of Transylvania by military force. At the same time she is ready to increase her agricultural supplies to Germany and give her the right to use the Hungarian railways. On June 29, Hungarian troops began to concentrate near the Romanian border<sup>697</sup>. At the same time, Hungary tried to find out the position of other great powers.

In July-August 1940, Moscow repeatedly stated that it considered its relations with Hungary to be normal and had no claims against it. At the same time, "the Soviet government believes that Hungary's claims to Romania are justified," and the USSR will adhere to this position "in the event that an international conference is convened, at which the question of Hungary's claims to Romania will eventually be raised." Hungarian attempts to obtain promises of more specific assistance have not been successful. England and the USA also supported the Hungarian claims. Behind this position of Moscow, London and Washington, one could easily guess the desire to use the Hungarian-Romanian conflict in order to quarrel potential allies of Germany and cause her economic difficulties. For their part, Germany and Italy,

noting the validity of the Hungarian claims, at the beginning of July 1940 advised Hungary to refrain from the use of force and try to resolve the issue through diplomacy. Contacts with Hungary, which began on the initiative of Romania on August 7, developed on August 16 into direct negotiations in the city of Turnu Severin. However, the cardinal divergence of positions of the parties and the absence of even a hint of mutual concessions led to the fact that on August 24 the negotiations finally failed, and in Budapest they decided to start a war with Romania on the morning of August 28. On August 27, Hungary notified Germany that the breakdown in negotiations was forcing her to consider the possibility of a military solution to the issue. Naturally, in Berlin they were not going to allow a Hungarian-Romanian conflict, and they accepted with satisfaction the consent of Romania expressed on August 27 to international arbitration. On August 29, in Vienna, the delegations of Hungary and Romania were informed of the need to maintain peace and the readiness of Germany and Italy to resolve the controversial issue. The next day, the decision of the Second Vienna Arbitration was issued, according to which the territory of Northern Transylvania with an area of 43,492 square meters was transferred to Hungary. km with a population of 2,667 thousand people, and Romania received a guarantee of its new borders. Such a solution to the Transylvanian issue suited Germany to the greatest extent, which, having promised the parties the possibility of revising it, received additional

leverage on both sides<sup>700</sup>. To calm the population, the Romanian leadership used the facts of incidents on the Soviet-Romanian border, inflating the version of the Soviet threat, which forced the decision of the Vienna Arbitration. For this purpose, the fact of the signing on September 3 of the Soviet-Hungarian treaty on trade and navigation was used, which was considered in Bucharest as the basis of a possible anti-Romanian Soviet-Hungarian alliance, which was refuted on September 9 in Pravda<sup>701</sup>. On September 6, 1940, King Carol II abdicated in favor of his son Mihai I, and General I. Antonescu became the head of the Romanian government. The new Romanian leadership decided to speed up rapprochement with Germany, and already on September 15-17, a request was sent to Berlin to send a military mission to Romania. In the first ten days of October, German troops arrived in declared that it had not been informed · Romania. On October 16, 1940, the USSR of the goals and number of German troops in Romania, numbering 22,430 people,<sup>702</sup> which on the same day agreed to join the Tripartite Pact. Economic cooperation with Romania

The Soviet Union failed to adjust due to the reluctance of Bucharest and the predominant economic influence of Germany. However, in order not to worsen the already cold Soviet Romanian relations, the Romanian leadership in December 1940 agreed to start economic negotiations, which ended on February 26, 1941 with the signing of an agreement on trade and navigation and an agreement on trade and payments, but this did not affect anti-Soviet position of Romania. The changed

situation in the Balkans demanded that the tactics of the local communist parties be clarified. Already on August 20, 1940, the ECCI approved a resolution on the situation in Hungary and the tasks of the CPV, according to which the main threat was the rapprochement of Hungary with Germany on the basis of a revision of the Hungarian borders. The Hungarian Communist Party was tasked with fighting for an independent foreign policy of the country and the preservation of peace, which was possible only on "the basis of good-neighbourly, honest friendly relations since September 5, 1940 in the great neighboring and unconditionally socialist power, the Soviet Union" 704 The ECCI developed a directive of the Romanian and the Hungarian Communist Party on the Transylvanian question, in which the Vienna Arbitration was directly called an imperialist diktat. The communist parties were tasked with intensifying the struggle against the reactionary ruling regimes, for the proletarian solidarity of the working people of both countries and for rapprochement with the USSR<sup>705</sup>

The decisions of the Vienna Arbitration caused discontent in Moscow, and when on August 31 Schulenburg notified Molotov of their content, the latter pointed out that Germany, by its actions, violated Article 3 of the non-aggression treaty, "by not consulting with the Soviet government on a question that cannot but affect the interests of the USSR, because the case is about two states bordering the Soviet Union." In addition, according to Molotov, these actions of Germany contradict her statement of June 1940 that "the questions of the Balkans and South-East Europe should be resolved jointly by the USSR, Germany and Italy." Schulenburg promised to convey this statement to Berlin, suggesting that "the lack of consultation with the USSR on this issue can only be explained by great haste in its decision"<sup>706</sup>. On September 9,

Schulenburg conveyed to Molotov the answer of the German government, according to which, since neither during the Moscow negotiations nor later did the USSR inform Berlin of its interests in Hungary and other territories of Romania, except for Bessarabia, then "the existence of mutual interests in the sense of the Moscow Pact there is no need to talk about non-aggression." By putting forward counterclaims regarding Soviet actions during the annexation of the Baltic states and Bessarabia, Germany indicated that it nevertheless supported the Soviet demands on Romania. The German government stated that its actions "with regard to Romania and Hungary were aimed at maintaining peace in the Danube region, which was seriously threatened by the existing tensions between both countries, which was possible only with quick diplomatic intervention", so there was no time left for Moscow to notify<sup>707</sup> Having heard this message, Molotov said that he would later give the ambassador a written response from the Soviet government, but for now he only states that "the point of view of the Soviet government diverges from the point of view of the German government," and again repeated his arguments regarding Germany's violation of Article 3 of the non-aggression pact. In addition, Molotov noted that the question of Southern Bukovina remained open and that the German "guarantees to Romania disagree with this wish" of the USSR, and again insisted on the need for consultations.

On September 21, Molotov handed over to Schulenburg a memorandum in response from the Soviet government to the German memorandum of September 9, which stated that Germany, by its actions in Vienna, nevertheless violated Article 3 of the non-aggression pact, since there is no "doubt that the decisions taken in Vienna to transfer a large part of Transylvania and about guarantees from Germany and Italy of the state territory of Romania are precisely those questions that affect the common interests of our

countries and therefore oblige to the consultation provided for in Art. 3 of the Treaty of August 23, 1939. "The USSR was faced with a fait accompli, and the German guarantees of the new borders of Romania give rise to assertions that they are directed against the USSR. This could have been avoided if both governments had consulted in advance. The Soviet government "confirms his statements about the recognition of Germany's special economic interests in Romania, especially in the field of oil and grain supplies, "but notes that the statement of the German government that after the solution of the Bessarabian question the USSR recognizes Germany's exclusive interests in Romania is incorrect. The Soviet government deflected Germany's reproaches regarding the lack of consultations on the issues of the Baltic and Bessarabia, pointing out their groundlessness. In addition, it was pointed out that the issues of

territorial settlement between Romania and Hungary had previously been discussed at the negotiations in Salzburg, and therefore the German government had had enough time to make contact with THE USSR. Therefore, haste cannot serve as an excuse for the failure of the German government to comply with Art. 3 non-aggression pact, the exact implementation of which is the condition for the pacification of the Danube basin. In conclusion, the Soviet government suggested that "if Article 3 of the Non-Aggression Pact represents certain inconveniences and embarrassments from the point of view of the German government, the Soviet government is ready to discuss the question of amending or canceling this article of the Treaty"709. On October 13, in his letter to Stalin, Ribbentrop explained Germany's actions in the Hungarian-Romanian dispute by the need to prevent the expansion of the sphere of war into the Balkans and argued that the German-Italian guarantees of Romania were not at all directed against the USSR. At the same time, he again referred to the lack of time for consultations with Moscow and reported that the German military mission sent a few days ago to Romania was aimed at helping train the Romanian army and protecting oil sources from possible actions of England710

The strengthening of German and the weakening of English influence in the Balkans led to the fact that, at the initiative of Germany, a meeting of experts was convened to determine the mode of navigation on the Danube, bypassing the existing Danube Commissions. Not being invited to this meeting, the USSR on September 9 turned to Germany with a notification of its interest in its work. Germany tried to dismiss the Soviet claims, citing that the upcoming meeting intended to focus on

consideration of the issue of navigation in the area of the Iron Gates. In this spirit, the official response from Berlin on September 12 was sustained, in which it was noted that Germany takes "the accession of the USSR to the European Danube Commission ... for granted." This answer did not satisfy Moscow, and on September 13 a message was published in the press that the USSR "hopes to receive relevant information from the German government about the 14 meeting of experts in Vienna on international Danube issues"711. the Soviet September side declared that it approved of the liquidation of the International and European Danube Commissions and advocated the creation of a new Danube Commission and was interested in resolving the issues of navigation on the Danube from Bratislava to its mouth712.

On October 13, Germany promised to take into account Soviet wishes in matters of the Danube regime, and on October 17 notified the USSR of its agreement with its proposal "on the formation of a single Danube Commission, but considers it necessary for Italy to participate in this commission." The Soviet side indicated the need to discuss this issue. On October 15, the USSR denied rumors that it was negotiating with England, Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey "on the question of Germany's advance to the East"714 and on October 19 expressed its readiness "to join the Interim Agreement" of 12 October pending the formation of the said Danube Commission. September 1940." and "to take part in joint negotiations between the authorized experts of the USSR, Germany, Romania and Italy in Bucharest to consider, as an interim solution, those tasks that the European Danube Commission has so far carried out"715 On October 28, negotiations began on the problems



regime of the mouth of the Danube, but Romania, with the tacit consent of Germany and Italy, took such an uncompromising position towards the USSR that, as a result, on December 21, 1940, fruitless negotiations were postponed indefinitely. For its part, England addressed the USSR on October 29 with a note in which it qualified Soviet participation in the work of this conference as a violation of neutrality. On November 2, the USSR rejected the English note and pointed out that participation in the conference was only the restoration of the historical rights of the USSR<sup>716</sup>. On November 1, TASS denied rumors about the supply of Soviet military aircraft to Greece<sup>717</sup>. Another destabilizing

factor in South-Eastern Europe was the attack on October 28, 1940 by Italy on Greece, which turned to England with a request for support due to British guarantees of 1939. On November 1, 4 English squadrons arrived in Crete, and on November 12, British aircraft carrier aviation attacked the Italian fleet at Taranto. Events on the Italo-Greek front developed sluggishly, already on November 7 the Italian offensive stalled, and on November 14 the Greeks launched a counterattack on the enemy and forced him to start retreating from November 21. The activation of England in the Eastern Mediterranean demanded from Germany the creation of guarantees for the security of the oil-bearing regions of Ploiesti and military security in the Balkans. Although Italy's initiative displeased Berlin, Germany could not allow the defeat of an ally, and on November 12, 1940, Hitler signed Directive No. 18, which provided for preparations for "to, if necessary, by an offensive from the territory of Bulgaria, seize continental Greece north of the Aegean Sea." This would allow the German Air Force to operate in the Eastern Mediterranean and repel the threat of British raids on the Romanian oil fields. Accordingly, it was required to bring Bulgaria to its side and neutralize Turkey<sup>718</sup>. Under these conditions, the importance of the peaceful expansion of Germany in the Balkans, which sought to consolidate the Balkan countries in the interests of fighting against England, and in the future against the

USSR, increased. Not only bilateral agreements, but also the Tripartite Pact, a military-political treaty of Germany, Italy and Japan, concluded on September 27, 1940, which Hungary joined on November 20, 1940, and Romania on November 23, were to become an instrument for subordinating the Balkan states. On November 23, the USSR denied rumors that Hungary had joined the Tripartite Pact with the consent of Moscow. The preparation of an operation against Greece required Germany to resolve the issue of Bulgaria's position, in relation to which it was necessary to use the revival of Bulgarian territorial claims against Greece regarding Western Thrace caused by the Italo-Greek war. As a result, Bulgaria found itself at the epicenter of the struggle between England, Germany and the USSR. On October 16, 1940, Germany officially invited Bulgaria to join the Tripartite Pact, promising support for its territorial claims, but Sofia was afraid to complicate relations with Yugoslavia, Greece, Turkey, England and the USSR, so on October 21, the Bulgarian Tsar Boris

III asked Hitler to postpone this step, referring to the difficulties of a foreign policy nature.

For its part, the Soviet leadership, dissatisfied with the rapprochement of Hungary and Romania with Germany, which created a barrier to Soviet penetration into the Balkans, decided to discuss the Balkan problems at the upcoming negotiations with Germany in Berlin. Thus, in the directives of the Soviet delegation of November 9, 1940, it was envisaged to achieve during the negotiations that in the Balkans "the area of the mouth of the Danube and Bulgaria were assigned to the sphere of interests of the USSR." Moreover, the latter, as "the main issue of the negotiations, should be, by agreement with Germany and Italy, assigned to the sphere of interests of the USSR on the same basis of guarantees to Bulgaria from the USSR, as was done by Germany and Italy in relation to Romania, with the entry of Soviet troops into Bulgaria". It was also necessary "to say about our dissatisfaction with the fact that Germany and Italy did not consult with the USSR on the question of guarantees and the introduction of troops into Romania", and to declare their interest in the further fate of Hungary, Romania and Turkey and the need for Soviet participation in resolving these issues<sup>720</sup>.

During the negotiations in Berlin, Molotov told Hitler that "the Soviet government expressed its dissatisfaction with the fact that Germany and Italy guaranteed the inviolability of the Romanian territory without consulting it. He believes that these guarantees were directed against the interests of the Soviet Union." Hitler replied that "Germany does not consider it possible to waive these guarantees for a certain time." Further, Molotov, using the German idea of the English danger in the Balkans, asked Hitler "what would the German government say if the Soviet government gives guarantees to Bulgaria on the same grounds as Germany and Italy gave them to Romania, and with full preservation of the internal regime existing in Bulgaria". Answering Molotov, Hitler stated that the German-Italian "guarantees were the only thing that persuaded Romania to cede Bessarabia to Russia without a fight", drew his attention to the economic importance of the Romanian oil reserves for Germany and Italy and noted that "the Romanian government itself asked Germany to take on themselves" protection of the oil-bearing regions from England for the duration of the war. "Did Bulgaria itself ask for such guarantees?" - asked Hitler and refused to determine his position until consultations with Italy<sup>721</sup>.

Despite such an unsuccessful end to negotiations on this issue, on November 25, 1940, the USSR expressed its readiness to accept the draft Four Powers Pact, subject to the conclusion of the Soviet-Bulgarian mutual assistance pact and the construction of a Soviet military base in the Bosphorus and Dardanelles. Without waiting for Germany's response, Moscow decided once again to offer Bulgaria a rapprochement. For its part, Germany also decided to clarify the position of Bulgaria, and on November 14 the Bulgarian Tsar was invited to Berlin, who, having visited Germany on November 17 and assured Hitler of his consent to join the Tripartite Pact, urged not to rush things. On the same day, November 17, 1940, Molotov instructed the Soviet plenipotentiary in Sofia to "hint" that the USSR "is capable of guaranteeing the security of Bulgaria" while maintaining "its current regime and meeting its historical demands." The next day, Molotov personally informed the Bulgarian envoy in Moscow that "if Bulgaria now needs any guarantee, then the USSR would give her such a guarantee now," while maintaining the internal regime. On November 24, a negative response to this proposal was sent to Moscow<sup>722</sup>.

Arriving in Sofia, Secretary General of the NKID A.A. On November 25, 1940, Sobolev met with Prime Minister B. Filov and Tsar Boris III, informing them of the USSR's proposal to conclude a mutual assistance treaty "which will help Bulgaria in the implementation of its national aspirations not only in Western, but also in Eastern Thrace", and carry out the supply of weapons. "On the condition that a mutual assistance pact is concluded with the USSR, there will be no objection to Bulgaria joining the well-known three-power pact. It is quite probable that the Soviet Union will also join the Tripartite Pact in this case"<sup>723</sup>. Boris told Sobolev that "now Bulgaria does not feel" a threat to its security, and spoke in favor of maintaining friendly Soviet-Bulgarian relations "without special demonstrations in this direction"<sup>724</sup>. At the same time, the USSR offered Greece supplies of weapons and hinted at its readiness to support Turkey, trying to keep them from interfering if Bulgaria accepted the Soviet proposal<sup>725</sup>. The importance attached by the Soviet leadership to this demarche can be seen from

the statements of Stalin recorded in the diary of G. Dimitrov, who, explaining the policy of the USSR in Bulgaria to the Secretary of the ECCI, stated on November 25 that "when concluding a pact on mutual assistance, we not only do not object to Bulgaria joining to the Tripartite Pact, but then we ourselves will accede to this pact ... The main thing now is Bulgaria. If such a pact is concluded, Turkey will not dare to fight against Bulgaria and the whole situation in the Balkans will look different. The proposal has been submitted to the Bulgarian government today ... We must so that this proposal is known in wide Bulgarian circles"<sup>726</sup>. Guided by instructions from Moscow, the BRP launched a broad campaign to propagate the Soviet proposal among the population and to accept it. Although this campaign was originally

It had a narrow class character, it had a significant resonance and continued until March 1941. On November 30, Bulgaria officially rejected the Soviet proposal, notifying Moscow that, even before its nomination, it had begun negotiations with Germany on joining the Tripartite Pact. On December 7, the USSR narrowed down its proposals to guarantees of the territorial integrity of Bulgaria and its interests, but this proposal was also rejected<sup>727</sup>.

Britain and the United States approved the rejection of the Soviet proposals and continued to put pressure on Bulgaria, hoping to keep it in a position of neutrality. For its part, Germany also stepped up pressure on Sofia, and on January 4, 1941, during the German-Bulgarian negotiations, Berlin promised to ensure that Bulgaria would not participate in the war and that the USSR would agree to its rapprochement with the Reich<sup>728</sup>. On January 5, 1941, German troops began to arrive in Romania, intended for an operation against Greece. This concentration caused a stir in the foreign press, which assumed, citing Bulgarian sources, that the Wehrmacht was already being transferred to Bulgaria with the knowledge and consent of the USSR. On January 13, a TASS statement was published, which noted that neither the German nor the Bulgarian governments had discussed these issues with the USSR, and if these rumors are true, "then all this happened and is happening without the knowledge and consent of the USSR"<sup>729</sup>. The next day, Berlin and Sofia officially denied the rumors about the transfer of the Wehrmacht to Bulgaria, while Germany stated that there were no disagreements with the USSR on the Bulgarian issue. At the same time, the BRP received from Moscow the task of actively working against the

policy of rapprochement with Germany, which was a good reason to discredit the government<sup>730</sup>. Nevertheless, the Soviet government decided to clarify this issue. On January 17, 1941, Molotov summoned Schulenburg and told him that, according to information available in Moscow, the German troops concentrated in Romania would enter Bulgaria, Greece and occupy the straits. But England might try to pre-empt them, and that would turn Bulgaria into a theater of war. The Soviet government has repeatedly stated to the German government that "it considers the territory of Bulgaria and both Straits a security zone of the USSR, which is why it cannot remain indifferent to events that threaten the security interests of the USSR." Therefore, "the Soviet government considers it its duty to warn that it will consider the appearance of any foreign armed forces on the territory of Bulgaria and both Straits as a violation of the security interests of the USSR"<sup>731</sup>. On the same day, a similar statement was

made in Berlin by the Soviet ambassador V.G. Dekanozov. On January 22, Weizsäcker received the Soviet ambassador in Berlin and informed him of the German government's response. In it, the German side rejected England's intention to occupy the straits, but expressed confidence that London intended to gain a bridgehead on Greek territory. This creates a threat to the interests of Germany, which decided to prevent such attempts by England, as Hitler told Molotov back in November 1940. Germany does not intend to violate the sovereignty of Turkey and the security interests of the USSR. For this operation, Germany is concentrating troops, but will withdraw them "after the completion of its operations in the Balkans." With regard to the Soviet proposals submitted to Berlin in November 1940, it was stated that they were being studied by the Axis countries and Japan, and that contacts with the Soviet side would be resumed on these issues in the near future<sup>732</sup>. At the same time, Dekanozov tried to find out "when we can expect the passage of German troops through Bulgaria to Greece" and "whether this decision is final", but did not receive clear answers<sup>733</sup>. On January 23, a similar statement was transmitted by Schulenburg to Molotov, who stated that this message should be understood in such a way that "the question of the passage of German troops through Bulgaria is in itself finally decided, but will be realized only if England expands its military operations on Greek territory on a larger scale than at present. Molotov then repeated the

Soviet government's argument about the USSR's security zone.<sup>734</sup> In January-February 1941, the USSR repeatedly reminded Bulgaria that its proposals were still in force. The Bulgarian leader

England means being drawn into the war, and rapprochement with the USSR is fraught with social changes. Thus, in Sophia's opinion, entry into the Tripartite Pact was the lesser of the two evils. On January 15, Germany agreed to meet the Bulgarian demands for access to the Aegean Sea, and on January 20, Bulgaria decided to join the Tripartite Pact on the terms of non-intervention in the Anglo-German war and the maintenance of German troops on Bulgarian territory. However, under German pressure, on February 2, Bulgaria agreed to bear the costs of maintaining Wehrmacht units, and on the same day a military agreement was signed, according to which the Bulgarian army was actually placed under German control. However, fearing retaliatory measures from England, Bulgaria was in no hurry to announce its intentions. In mid-February, covert mobilization and concentration of troops near the Yugoslav and Greek borders began in Bulgaria. Meanwhile, the situation in the Mediterranean changed. On December 9, 1940,

British troops defeated the Italian units that invaded Egypt, and, practically without resistance, began to advance to Libya. On December 13, 1940, Hitler approved Directive No. 20, which provided for the capture of Greece (Plan Marita). At the end of December 1940, Germany offered Greece to prevent the expansion of the British presence, but Athens' attempts to achieve German mediation in relation to Italy failed. According to the instructions of the OKW of December 21, 1940, in order to explain the measures for the concentration of German troops in southern Romania to the pending requests of the USSR, "it is necessary to give the answer that Germany cannot agree to the presence of the British and their consolidation in the Balkans and that, in addition, in connection with the accession of Romania to the tripartite pact, she promised to stand up for her defense. For this reason, the concentration of forces created is in no way directed against Russia; this is already evidenced by the very concentration of troops exclusively in southern Romania. " It should also have been stated "that Germany has no intentions against Yugoslavia or Turkey"<sup>736</sup>. On January 7, Turkey offered Bulgaria negotiations on mutual non-aggression and non-letting of foreign troops, but the Bulgarian leadership was delaying the definition of its position, waiting for instructions from Berlin. On January 11, 1941, Hitler signed Directive No. 22, which provided for the assistance in the military operations of Italy by the transfer of German troops to Libya and Albania. On January 21, this plan was amended, and the dispatch of German troops to Albania was postponed indefinitely by accelerating the transfer of troops to Libya<sup>737</sup>.

England, seeking to keep Greece in the war, demanded the consent of the Greek government to the establishment of air bases in northern Greece and began working out a plan for landing troops in the Balkans. England's desire to create a Yugoslav-Greek-Turkish bloc forced her to intensify her policy in Southeastern Europe. However, during the Anglo-Greek negotiations on January 14-16, 1941, the Greeks demanded the landing of 8-9 British divisions. When it became clear that England intended to use 2-3 divisions, the Greek leadership, not wanting to irritate Germany, on January 18 refused this proposal, notifying Berlin of this. Yugoslavia and Türkiye took an equally reserved position regarding the British proposals. For its part, the USSR on February 4 denied rumors of a secret Soviet-Turkish agreement, "according to which the USSR undertook to supply Turkey with weapons to counter the possible activity of Germany in the Balkans, and that in connection with this, a Turkish commission was leaving for Moscow for a new attempt by England to expand its undertaken on presence there was a purchase of weapons in the Balkans"<sup>738</sup>. February 8, when the question of the landing of British troops was again raised before Greece. Although the Greek position has not changed, on February 10, the British leadership decided to suspend the offensive in Libya and begin preparing troops for the transfer to the Balkans. On the same day, German troops began landing in Tripoli, and England severed diplomatic relations with Romania and warned Bucharest and Sofia that if the Wehrmacht entered the territory of Bulgaria, the British Air Force would attack the oil production areas, bridges and railways of these countries<sup>739</sup>.

In the meantime, Turkey informed Germany that it would not interfere in the Balkan events unless its interests were affected. Formally, Turkey was bound by obligations of mutual assistance with Greece and Yugoslavia by virtue of participation in the Balkan Entente, but according to this agreement, support was provided only in the event of an attack by the Balkan power. Germany agreed to complete the Bulgarian-Turkish negotiations, and on February 17, 1941, the Bulgarian-Turkish declaration of friendship and non-aggression was signed. Rumors immediately appeared in the press that this agreement was prepared with Soviet participation, which was refuted by TASS on February 23. On February 19, 1941, the German command set a date for the start of building bridges across the Danube (February 28) and the entry of the Wehrmacht into Bulgaria (March 2)<sup>740</sup>. In this situation, England decided to show firmness, fearing that her passive position would lead to the loss of influence in Greece, Yugoslavia and Turkey and disapproval of the United States. On February 21, it was decided to land British troops in Greece, the consent of which was achieved during negotiations on February 22-23. The Anglo-Turkish negotiations on February 25-28, 1941 showed that Ankara continues to evade participation in the war. Yugoslavia took the same position.

Meanwhile, Bulgaria's negotiations with Germany and Italy were drawing to a close. On the evening of February 28, Schulenburg informed Molotov that on March 1, Bulgaria would sign a protocol on accession to the Tripartite Pact. After listening to the message, Molotov stated that the German government knew the position of the USSR regarding Bulgaria, and such actions run counter to this position. On March 1, at 19.45, a protocol was signed in Vienna on Bulgaria's accession to the Tripartite Pact<sup>743</sup>. As early as February 28, German troops were building bridges across the Danube and at 0600 on March 2 entered Bulgaria<sup>744</sup>. On the evening of March 1, Schulenburg informed the Soviet government that, in view of the danger of landing British troops in Greece, the German army was entering Bulgaria. The German government promised to respect Turkey's sovereignty and to withdraw its troops "expressed - after the British danger had been eliminated. In response, Molotov deep concern that, on a question in the Balkans<sup>745</sup> of such importance to the Soviet Union, the German government had taken a decision contrary to the opinion of the Soviet government on the security interests of the USSR". Further, Molotov immediately sketched a note by hand, which noted the regret of the Soviet government about the fact that "the German government found it possible to take the path of violating the security interests of the USSR and decided to occupy Bulgaria with troops," therefore the Soviet Union does not support in response to a message from these measures. Schulenburg only on March 3, 1941, Bulgaria about repeating the instructions of Berlin<sup>746</sup>. on the entry of German troops into its territory, the USSR declared that it did not consider the position taken by the Bulgarian leadership to be correct, since it "leads not to strengthening peace, but to expanding the sphere of war and drawing Bulgaria into it," and therefore cannot "provide any support for the Bulgarian government in carrying out its current policy"<sup>747</sup>

On March 4, the transfer of British troops to Greece began, and Hitler assured the President of Turkey in a personal letter that Germany was not going to attack Turkey, but was acting only against England. Ankara was asked to develop economic ties and not provoke Berlin. On the same day, the United States froze Bulgarian accounts, and on March 5, England severed diplomatic relations with Bulgaria. On March 9, the USSR declared to Turkey that if it "really comes under attack by some foreign power and is forced to defend the inviolability of its territory with arms in hand," then it "can count on the full understanding and neutrality of the Soviet Union." On March 10, the USSR announced this step to England. On March 18-19, England again tried to achieve Turkey's participation in the anti-German bloc in the Balkans, but Ankara's evasive position remained unchanged. On March 20, the USSR handed over to Hungary the Hungarian banners taken by Russian troops during the suppression of the national liberation uprising in 1849, which had a noticeable impact on the country's public opinion. On March 25, the above-mentioned Soviet statement addressed to Turkey was published in Moscow, confirming that

"full understanding and neutrality of the USSR"748 will be ensured for it only in the event of external aggression, and not in case of intervention in the war on its

own initiative. The strengthening of German influence in the Balkans put Yugoslavia in a difficult position. In Belgrade, they understood that strength was on the side of Germany, but the sympathies of the population were mainly on the side of England. Part of the ruling circles considered it necessary to move closer to the USSR, which, in their opinion, was safer, since it was a neutral country. The Soviet side, trying not to aggravate relations with Germany, took a wait-and-see attitude, confining itself to expressing sympathy for Yugoslavia in the struggle for its "political and economic independence" and agreeing to consider selling weapons to the Yugoslav army on a regular commercial basis. At the same time, as early as September 15, 1940, the CPY received the task of resolutely fighting "for friendship and a close alliance between the peoples of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union." In response to Belgrade's consent, on December 22, a proposal was made from Berlin to join the Tripartite Pact. Earlier, Germany agreed to the conclusion of the Hungarian-Yugoslav Treaty of Peace and Eternal Friendship, which was supposed to serve as an additional incentive for Yugoslavia to rapprochement with the Axis powers. On February 14, 1941, during the new German-Yugoslav

negotiations, the Greek port of Thessaloniki was offered as territorial compensation for Yugoslavia for joining the Tripartite Pact. Under these conditions, the Yugoslav leadership stepped up its contacts with the great powers, trying to use their contradictions in their own interests. As early as February 8, Yugoslavia asked the USSR to take some step in support of its position. At the end of February, B. Simich arrived in Moscow on a secret mission. Unfortunately, the purpose of this visit is still unknown, but, based on further events and data from Yugoslav historians that Simic adhered to Slavophile ideas and was associated with the Black Hand patriotic organization of the Serbian military, as well as with Soviet intelligence, it can be assumed that in Moscow he discussed the issues of concluding a military alliance751 At the same time, in response to a request from England, Yugoslavia declared that it would resist in the event of an attack on it or attempts to transit foreign troops through its territory, but could not assume any obligations in against Greece. In the meantime, Germany stepped up the pressure, and on March 7, 1941, Yugoslavia agreed to enter into the Tripartite Pact on the condition of non-participation in the war, preventing the transit of German troops through its territory and receiving

Thessaloniki after the war. However, the domestic political struggle did not end there. On March 13, it was decided to ask the USSR about the possibility of concluding a military alliance. Contacts also continued with England, which sought to get Belgrade's support for Greece. Germany's acceptance of the conditions put forward by Yugoslavia led the Yugoslav government to decide on March 20 to join the Tripartite Pact, which caused a ministerial crisis. Nevertheless, on March 25, a protocol was signed in Vienna on Yugoslavia's accession to the Tripartite Pact. This caused mass protests in the country, on March 27 in Belgrade, with the support of British and Soviet intelligence, a coup d'etat took place: Peter II was elevated to the throne and the government of General D. Simovic was formed. Upon learning of this, Hitler on the same day signed Directive No. 25 on the attack on Yugoslavia at the same time as the invasion of Greece. Although the new Yugoslav government, in an effort to buy time, did not announce the termination of the accession protocol to the Tripartite Pact, Berlin now viewed Yugoslavia as an adversary. The concentration of the Wehrmacht near the Yugoslav borders began. The March events caused a certain euphoria in the leadership of the CPY, which on March 28 reported to Moscow about their support for the anti-German and anti-English course of the new government, which was inclined towards an alliance with the USSR.

On March 31, the ECCI pointed out to the CPY

the need to preserve and accumulate party forces and carefully prepare for the upcoming class battles<sup>754</sup> On March 28, Yugoslavia turned to the USSR with a request to sell military materials, which caused a positive reaction from Moscow. On March 30, Yugoslavia notified the USSR of its intention to defend itself against a possible German attack, its unwillingness to accept help from England for fear of being drawn into the war, its desire to obtain Soviet weapons and its desire to conclude a "military-political alliance on any terms that the Soviet government proposes, up to some social changes carried out in the USSR". In addition, the Yugoslav leadership was interested in the possibility of Soviet intercession in Berlin<sup>755</sup>. On March 31, Yugoslavia notified the USSR that the protocol on accession to the Tripartite Pact remained in force. On the same day, Moscow agreed to the proposal to negotiate an alliance, and on April 1 approved the Yugoslav position towards Germany. At the same time, the Anglo-Yugoslav negotiations on cooperation between Yugoslavia and Greece, which took place on March 31 - April 1, as well as the Anglo-Yugoslav-Greek military negotiations on April 3, did not lead to the signing of any documents<sup>756</sup>. At the Soviet-Yugoslav talks that began on April 3 in Moscow,

the Yugoslav side proposed its own draft treaty of friendship and alliance, agreeing to the entry of Soviet troops. Assessing the situation in Yugoslavia, the Soviet People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs believed that the Yugoslav leadership was "seriously preparing to repulse German claims, not stopping even before a war to defend its independence." Therefore, "the political support of Yugoslavia by the USSR in its struggle for the preservation of its state independence would be in line with our state interests. Of course, this or that appropriate step on our part will not be an absolute guarantee that Yugoslavia will not be attacked by the Axis powers, but the very fact of our support will be of great political importance for Yugoslavia and at the same time will greatly strengthen our positions in the Balkans. Yugoslavia agreed, but requested that the phrase about maintaining neutrality in the event of an attack on one of the contracting parties be removed from the treaty and that Soviet military supplies be accelerated.

On April 4, Molotov summoned Schulenburg and told him that, in accordance with the Soviet-German treaty, the Soviet government was informing the German government that the Yugoslav government had offered the USSR to conclude a treaty of friendship and non-aggression, and the USSR had accepted this proposal. In the opinion of the Soviet government, this does not run counter to Germany's desire to fight against the expansion of the war. The Soviet government expressed the hope that Germany would do everything to keep peace with Yugoslavia. Schulenburg replied that he doubted that the moment for signing the treaty was well chosen. In addition, "the very conclusion of the treaty will create an undesirable impression in the world." Yugoslav policy is not clear, and her attitude towards Germany is "simply defiant." To this, Molotov replied that Yugoslavia had signed a protocol with Germany on accession to the Tripartite Pact, and the Yugoslav ambassador in Moscow assured the Soviet government that Yugoslavia continued to support this protocol. Based on this, the Soviet government decided to sign the treaty, which will happen today or tomorrow. Schulenburg replied that Yugoslavia had not yet confirmed its entry into the Tripartite Pact, and expressed doubts about the goodwill of the Yugoslav government. Declaring that "he is convinced of the peaceful intentions of the Yugoslav government," Molotov ended the conversation by stating that the Soviet government had "well thought over its step and made a final decision," and once again urged the German government to do "everything possible to preserve peace in the Balkans."<sup>758</sup>

On April 5, the USSR declared to Yugoslavia that it was not against its rapprochement with England and even considered it "expedient." As rightly pointed out by L.Ya. Gibiansky, the Kremlin's goal "was that Yugoslavia, obviously, in conjunction with Greece, would form, with the most active participation of England, an anti-Hitler front in the Balkans, which would

is capable of for some time chaining quite significant forces of Germany to itself. For its part, Moscow was ready to secretly support this front. April 6 at 2.30 am in the course of the last agreements, Stalin decided to delete from the treaty the mention of "neutrality", and at about 3 o'clock in the morning the contract was signed, although it was dated April 5. But Germany was not going to reckon with such demonstrations. Early morning April 6 the Luftwaffe bombed Belgrade and other cities, the Wehrmacht crossed the border of Yugoslavia and Greece. On the same day at 16.00 Schulenburg informed Molotov about the beginning of the war on Balkans. These actions of Germany were explained by the threat of the Anglo-Yugoslav-Greek military actions against Germany and Italy. The German government declared that it had no Balkans "absolutely no interests, political or territorial, and will bring troops from the Balkans after completing their task." Molotov said to all this that he was very it is sad that the expansion of the war nevertheless turned out to be inevitable<sup>760</sup> At the same time, on April 12 The USSR strongly condemned the participation of Hungary in the war against Yugoslavia<sup>761</sup> .

Events in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans developed rapidly. More On March 31, German troops in Libya went on the offensive and by April 15 they threw back English units to the Egyptian border. On April 17, Yugoslavia capitulated, and on April 23 Greece stopped resisting. British troops were forced to evacuate Crete. Although the front in Libya stabilized, on April 28 the situation in the Middle East escalated. East, when Iraq refused to let British troops through its territory, following from India. England decided to crush the resistance by force, and the Iraqi leadership May 2 asked Germany for help with weapons. May 5-6 at the request of Germany France agreed to transfer to Iraq 3/4 of the weapons located in Syria, and the German Air Force received permission to use Syrian airfields. This made things difficult England, and on May 14, the British Air Force received an order to act against German aviation in Syria. In the meantime, Germany prepared and carried out an airborne operation on May 20 - June 1 to capture Crete, creating an important foothold in the Eastern Mediterranean. At this time, England defeated the Iraqi troops and approved on May 31, 1941 d. friendly government in Baghdad. On June 8, British troops invaded Syria, and June 15-18 launched an unsuccessful offensive in Libya<sup>762</sup> .

During the war in the Balkans, the Soviet leadership demonstrated emphatically loyal stance towards Germany. On May 8, the USSR broke diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia, and on June 3 - with Greece, on May 13 announced establishing diplomatic relations with Iraq, but on May 17, TASS denied rumors about that "the Soviet government allowed the recruitment of volunteers among pilots for enlistment in the Iraqi Air Force." During the May 1941 Ankara Soviet-German consultations on the Middle East, the Soviet side emphasized readiness to take into account German interests in this region<sup>763</sup>. Further drawing Germany into the war in the Middle East was in the hands of Moscow, since any a German offensive in this region would, in the first place, put an almost irresistible barrier to a possible collusion between London and Berlin and, secondly, would take away the most combat-ready forces of the Wehrmacht from Eastern Europe. April 10 Romanian Communist Party received the task of intensifying the struggle against the involvement of Romania in the war and for friendship with the USSR, which was supposed to impede the activities of the government and the actions of Germany<sup>764</sup>. At the end May 1941 Moscow informed the Romanian government that it was "ready to solve everything territorial issues with Romania and take into account certain wishes regarding the revision [of the borders] if Romania joins the Soviet peace policy", those. withdraw from the Tripartite Pact. True, there was no answer from Bucharest. The

Balkans has traditionally been a region in Europe where interests clashed almost all the great powers of the continent. With renewed vigor, the struggle for the Balkans flared up with the start of World War II. Already in 1939, the Soviet Union made a new attempt to expand its influence in Southeastern Europe by trying to create a Soviet-Turkish Bulgarian bloc in August - October 1939. At the same time, the conclusion of the Soviet-German



The non-aggression pact and the outbreak of war in Europe allowed the USSR to achieve recognition by Germany of Soviet interests in Bessarabia and somewhat neutralize German opposition to Soviet penetration into the Balkans, for which economic and cultural ties were used, as well as local communist parties. The change in the strategic situation in Europe in May-June 1940 allowed the USSR to intensify its policy in the Balkans. With the consent of Berlin and Rome, the Bessarabian issue was resolved, and Moscow supported the Hungarian and Bulgarian claims to Romania. However, the shift of the center of military-political events in the Mediterranean put the Balkans at the epicenter of the diplomatic struggle between Germany, Italy, England and the USSR.

The actions of Soviet diplomacy in the Balkans proceeded from the need for the USSR to remain outside the warring factions, cautious opposition to the further strengthening of Germany, through which the positions of England were weakened, and the expansion of the influence of local communist parties and the Soviet Union. The active use of the local communist parties by the USSR led to the fact that the ruling elites, fearing social changes, began to gradually lean towards Germany. By March 1941, it became clear that the governments of the Balkan countries would not move closer to the USSR, so the aggravation of the situation in the Balkans met Soviet interests. In their assessments, the Soviet leadership proceeded from the importance of continuing the Anglo-German war, so the outbreak of the war in the Balkans immediately changed the position of the USSR, which began to intensively demonstrate loyalty to Germany. Although by the summer of 1941, as noted in Russian historiography, the Soviet Union failed to increase its influence in the Balkans, which were captured by Germany and its allies, we should not forget that the German occupation led to the expansion of anti-German sentiments, which created a favorable environment for strengthening the influence of local Communist parties, and through them for the Soviet penetration, w

### **Soviet Union between England and Germany**

The relations of the Soviet Union with the European great powers at the beginning of World War II were determined by the split of Europe into three military-political camps: Anglo-French, German-Italian and Soviet, each of which sought to achieve its own goals. The following calculations formulated by I.V. Stalin on September 7, 1939, in a conversation with the leadership of the Comintern: "The war is going on between two groups of capitalist countries (poor and rich in terms of colonies, raw materials, etc.) for the redivision of the world, for dominance over the world! We are not averse to them "We had a good fight and weakened each other. It would not be bad if the position of the richest capitalist countries (especially England) would be shaken by Germany's hands. Hitler himself, without understanding and not wanting this, is upsetting and undermining the capitalist system.... We can maneuver, push one side against the other, so that they are better torn apart. The non-aggression pact helps Germany to some extent. Thus, the next moment is to push the other side. The Soviet going to take full advantage of the position of "an observer in the war leadership was between two imperialist groups"<sup>767</sup>. The outbreak of war in Europe and the actions of the Red Army in Poland after September 17, 1939 did not improve

Soviet-British and Soviet-French relations, which deteriorated after the signing of the non-aggression pact with Germany, which was perceived by the British and French leadership as a defeat of their foreign policy strategy. At the same time, not wanting to push the USSR towards further rapprochement with Germany, England and France did not exacerbate the problem of Soviet intervention in the German-Polish war, but tried to clarify the Soviet position regarding the war in Europe. Already on September 18, French Prime Minister E. Daladier asked the Soviet ambassador whether the USSR was temporarily taking the Ukrainian and Belarusian population under its armed protectorate, or whether Moscow intended to annex these territories to the USSR<sup>768</sup>

It was widely believed in England and France that the entry of Soviet troops into Poland is anti-German, and this could lead to increased tensions in Soviet-German relations. In London, they feared that Moscow could enter the war on the side of Berlin, so the Soviet declaration of neutrality in the European war was received there with satisfaction. On

September 18, at a meeting of the British government, it was decided that, according to the Anglo-Polish agreement, England was bound to defend Poland only in the event of aggression from Germany. Therefore, it was decided "not to send Russia any protest." And although the Anglo-French press allowed itself rather harsh statements, the official position of England and France was reduced to a tacit recognition of the Soviet action in Poland<sup>769</sup> Nevertheless, the Western Allies attempted to obtain a more detailed response from Moscow about the intentions of the USSR. On September 20, France repeated its request<sup>770</sup>. 23 September 1939 London asked the Soviet government if it was ready to respond to English proposal for trade negotiations or its agreement with Germany "does such negotiations are generally pointless. "The British leadership was also interested in "how does the Soviet government think of the future of Poland? In particular, is it the existing demarcation line is a temporary military measure or has more constant value?", as well as how much the principles of the Soviet foreign politicians<sup>771</sup> .

September 27, the day when Ribbentrop again arrived in Moscow, to the attention of the English leadership was brought a response from Moscow, according to which the USSR agreed to conduct trade negotiations with England. Regarding the fate of Poland, the Soviet leadership believed that "the current demarcation line does not, of course, represent a state border between Germany and the USSR. The fate of Poland depends on many factors and opposing forces, which are currently not yet possible to take into account. Naturally, Moscow stressed that the principles of Soviet foreign policy were not changed, and Soviet-German relations "are determined by the non-aggression pact"<sup>772</sup>. Is it a coincidence that the Soviet-German Treaty of Friendship signed on the night of September 29 and the border of September 28, 1939, as V.Ya. Sipols<sup>773</sup>, contrary to his name determined not the border between Germany and the USSR, but the border between their "mutual state interests on the territory of the former Polish state"? Not it is possible that neither Berlin nor Moscow wanted to sign an official document, in which would have fixed the division of Poland between them.

This made it possible to show England and France that the USSR did not lay claim to national Polish territories, and his actions are potentially anti-German. Generally England accepted the Soviet position, and on October 17 and 27 it was brought to the attention of the USSR that London wants to see an ethnographic Poland of modest size and cannot be no question about the return of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus to her<sup>774</sup>. Generally on In the West, many believed that the USSR did not participate in the partition of Poland, since the western regions Ukraine and Belarus were not Polish territories, and the problem of restoration Poland was connected only with Germany. Accordingly, England and France advised the Polish government in exile not to declare war on the USSR<sup>775</sup> In London and Paris . Two foreign policy courses were outlined in relation to Moscow. One of them considered the USSR as the main enemy of the Western allies, to damage to which all means were good, and the second proceeded from the need for the initial the defeat of Germany, which required the involvement of Moscow in the anti-German front by any possible ways. In any case, the Western Allies were interested in provoking tension in Soviet-German relations, for which used, for example, the Soviet-Turkish negotiations on September 25 - October 17, 1939 about mutual assistance agreement. In addition, Anglo-French propaganda actively used thesis about the "red danger" for Europe<sup>776</sup>.

In addition to the propaganda pressure on the USSR, Britain and France, who relied on the economic strangulation of Germany by cutting off its foreign trade, began to refuse to fulfill Soviet orders, up to the confiscation of already finished products. According to London and Paris, this should have made it difficult for Soviet economic assistance to Germany, and besides, as rightly noted in a speech at the 6th session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR V.M. Molotov, "the Anglo-French ruling circles have frustrated their calculations about using our country in the war against Germany, and on September 6, they are therefore pursuing a revenge against the Soviet Union" 777 England announced a list of trade items - policy of that she would consider as contraband, and on September 11 announced its intention to inspect ships of neutral countries in order to search for contraband to Germany. It is clear that the delays and arrests of Soviet and USSR chartered ships did not contribute to the improvement of Anglo-Soviet relations. In response to trade discrimination, the USSR also reduced its supplies to England and France. However, England, interested in obtaining Soviet timber, on September 18 offered to exchange it for delayed Soviet orders. As a result, on October 11, a Soviet-British agreement was concluded on the exchange of Soviet timber for rubber and tin 778

Intending to reach a trade agreement with neutral countries for the duration of the war, England probed the USSR in early October for the start of trade negotiations. On October 25, the USSR sent a note to England, in which it stated its violation of international law and declared that it did not recognize the legitimacy of blockade measures and "reserves the right to demand compensation from the British Government for damages" caused by these British measures. In London, this note was received with displeasure, but the British government tried not to push the USSR towards rapprochement with Germany and on October 26 again offered to start trade negotiations. On November 11, 1939, the USSR declared that it sympathized with the intentions of some members of the British government in the desire to "improve Anglo-Soviet political and trade relations", but "does not see favorable prospects in this matter at the moment", since England takes a hostile position towards the USSR, and "improvement of relations between the USSR and England requires that such a policy of the British authorities be changed for the better" 781 This did not prevent England on November 27 from again asking Moscow if she wanted trade negotiations, since, according to London, no hostile acts or attitude towards the USSR was not undertaken.

On November 28, England legally issued a ban on German trade and the right of the Western allies to inspect all ships in search of goods for Germany. On November 30, Germany asked the USSR to protest to England on the issue of toughening economic war measures. In the context of the aggravation of relations between the USSR and Britain and France in connection with the outbreak of the Soviet-Finnish war, the question of trade negotiations was no longer needed. In addition to the propaganda and trade war, Britain and France did not exclude the use and number of military measures against the USSR, which they considered as a non-belligerent ally of Germany. Already at the end of September 1939, the development of plans for military operations against the Soviet Union using its Eastern European neighbors, as well as against the Caucasian oil fields, began.

During the outbreak of the war at sea, the British Navy quickly found out that part of the German ships had taken refuge in Murmansk. It is clear that British ships soon appeared in the Barents Sea, with the aim of intercepting German ships at the moment they entered neutral waters. Once the commander of one of the coastal batteries of the Soviet Northern Fleet opened fire on 2 British destroyers, which, in his opinion, were in Soviet territorial waters. Putting a smoke screen, the destroyers went out from under the fire of Soviet long-range guns into the open sea. However, there was no note of protest from England: apparently, the ships actually entered the Soviet

territorial waters or were literally on their edge. In addition, the Soviet naval command was afraid of the appearance of the Anglo-French squadron in the Black Sea. Therefore, the Black Sea Fleet conducted intense reconnaissance on the outskirts of Odessa and Sevastopol. In addition to aerial reconnaissance on the outskirts of these Soviet ports, the Romanian port of Constanta, the Bulgarian Varna and Burgas, near about. Snake and at the entrance to the Bosphorus on September 17, Soviet submarines were deployed in positions. In total, 10 submarines went out to sea, but the Black Sea sailors did not have any real enemy<sup>785</sup> Germany behaved completely differently towards the .

USSR. Already on September 6, the German side announced the need to expand economic relations with the USSR, and "the existing commodity-credit agreement will be observed by Germany exactly, despite the war"<sup>786</sup>. The events of September 17 - October 12 in Poland provided an example of successful Soviet-German cooperation. During Ribbentrop's second visit to Moscow on September 28, an exchange of letters took place between him and Molotov, in which the parties emphasized their readiness "to develop economic relations and trade in every possible way" so that it "reaches the highest volume achieved in the past in terms of its size." At the same time, the USSR agreed to organize German transit trade with third countries.

In addition to discussing the political issues of Eastern Europe and the economic problems of Soviet-German relations, Ribbentrop expressed the desire to set up a repair base for German ships and submarines in Murmansk. On October 5, Molotov told Schulenburg that "Murmansk is not sufficiently isolated for this purpose" and offered Teriberka Bay, east of Murmansk, instead. On October 15, Germany turned to the Soviet side for permission to use Soviet ports (Murmansk, Vladivostok, etc.) and shipyards for the supply and repair of German ships and with a request to organize the supply of German raiders and submarines at sea with Soviet ships. However, the German naval attaché in Moscow, Captain 1st Rank von Baumbach, informed Berlin that a positive solution to all these issues could not be counted on, since the ports of Murmansk and Vladivostok were too open for foreign ships, visiting which could make it difficult to maintain secrecy and pose a threat to neutrality USSR, and Teriberka Bay is not suitable for basing the fleet, because it is not sufficiently protected from bad weather<sup>788</sup>. As a result of the negotiations, as the commander of the German Navy, Grand Admiral E. Raeder, reported to Hitler on October 16, "the Russians have put

at our disposal a well-located base west of Murmansk, where it will be possible to locate a floating workshop." This "Nord" base was Zapadnaya Litsa Bay on the southern coast of Motovsky Bay, which had been placed at the disposal of the Germans since November 1939, which was originally supposed to be used as a secret supply and repair point for submarines and raiders. However, in reality, it was never used in this capacity, although there were 6 supply vessels there, one of which was involved in the period of the Norwegian operation. From mid-September, the German liner Bremen hid from the British fleet in Murmansk, upon departure on December 6, the Soviet authorities detained all other ships in the port for 3 days, which facilitated its passage to Germany, where it arrived on December 12<sup>789</sup>.

On October 23, the steamship City of Flint arrived in the Kola Bay, captured in the Atlantic by the German battleship Deutschland with a cargo of strategic raw materials. On the same day, the Soviet authorities interned the German team. On October 25, in response to a request from Germany about the fate of the ship, the Soviet side stated that it was forced to comply with the formalities<sup>790</sup>. However, already on October 26, the internment was canceled, since it turned out that the ship had arrived to repair the machines, which was reported to Germany, and on October 28, after checking the cargo and repairing the machines, the City of Flint left Murmansk. At the same time, the Soviet side pointed out that the planned deployment of the German fleet to control the sea

trade at the mouth of the Gulf of Finland does not meet Soviet interests and creates the impression that Berlin is acting in support of Finland, which is negotiating with Moscow. Liepaja was located on this meridian, which became the base of the KBF792. Germany had to take into account Soviet wishes. In addition, the Soviet leadership, demonstrating Soviet-German friendship, agreed to the publication of a joint Soviet-

German declaration of necessity. Appropriate changes were made to the Soviet Union to end the war as soon as possible,<sup>793</sup> and on November 30, the day the Soviet-Finnish war stated that "it was not Germany that began, Pravda published propaganda<sup>794</sup>, in which Stalin Germany, taking that attacked France and England, but France and England attacked responsibility for the current war; after the opening of hostilities, Germany turned to France and England with peace proposals, and the Soviet Union openly supported Germany's peace proposals, because it believed and continues to believe that the speedy end of the war radically facilitated the situation of all countries and peoples; the ruling circles of England and France rudely rejected both the peace proposals of Germany and the attempts of the Soviet Union to achieve a speedy end to the war "<sup>795</sup>

An important instrument of influence of the USSR was the communist parties of European countries, which were going through a difficult time in connection with Moscow's foreign policy zigzags. Being too closely associated with the anti-fascist struggle, the Communist parties were not immediately able to adapt to the situation that arose after the non-aggression pact. In addition, on August 26, 1939, the communist press was banned in France, which hit the capacity of the largest communist organization in Europe. Nevertheless, the communist parties initially took anti-fascist positions in the outbreak of the war, although, as a rule, they stipulated the conditionality of their support for their own governments. But on September 8-9, an order came from Moscow to base communist propaganda on the thesis of an imperialist war, in which the bourgeoisie of all countries is to blame. Therefore, the Communist Parties were faced with the task of fighting against the warmongers, which at that moment were considered England and France, for "genuine peace", which "occurs only when the causes of imperialist war have been eliminated: the capitalist system, imperialist oppression"<sup>796</sup>. At the same time, the communist parties should not have focused on the revolutionary struggle in order to avoid repression by the authorities and isolation from the population. Thus, the activities of the Comintern focused on the struggle against the influence of England and France, which to a certain extent was in the hands of Germany, but to a greater extent reflected the interests of the USSR, since it was supposed to overthrow the power of "English imperialism" during the war.

Upon the arrival of the German economic delegation in Moscow on October 8, 1939, Soviet-German economic negotiations began, in which Germany tried to achieve an increase in Soviet supplies of raw materials in excess of the agreement of August 19, 1939 to compensate for losses from the Anglo-French economic blockade. Germany hoped that compensation from her side for these raw materials would take the form of long-term programs for the supply of goods and investments for up to 5 years, that is, it was supposed to encourage the Soviet Union to make advanced deliveries. However, it quickly became clear that the USSR was not going to fulfill the wishes of Germany to the detriment of its own interests. On October 20, the Soviet side handed over to the Germans a program of military orders and purchases in Germany, which included the most modern equipment. On October 26, a Soviet economic delegation arrived in Germany to get acquainted with the purchased goods, which visited German enterprises. By order of Hitler, the Soviet representatives were shown all the mass production of weapons, except for experimental or classified developments. Such an approach produced a "generally favorable impression" on the Soviet delegation.

Far East: tariffs were temporarily reduced by 50%. November 30 Germany insisted a 50% reduction in all other transit tariffs, while the USSR agreed only to 20% discount<sup>799</sup>. December 11, Germany said that the USSR wants to get too much military orders that are difficult to fulfill due to wartime<sup>800</sup>. But a new tour negotiations, which began on December 19, showed that, in the opinion of the Soviet government, "only the implementation of deliveries for all items listed in the list will be a sufficient equivalent for the supply of raw materials, which today have not yet been purchased for Germany on the world market"<sup>801</sup>. On December 22, Schulenburg remarked to Molotov that "the program the Soviet side is too large, and the German government, being in a position war, cannot fulfill these orders." In response, the Soviet side agreed to reduce number of orders, but insisted on a price reduction by the German side<sup>802</sup>. December 23 signed a Soviet-German agreement on the organization of cargo railway communication, and on December 28 about air communication between Germany and USSR<sup>803</sup>. On December 31, the trade and payment agreement from 1 March 1938<sup>804</sup>

The main issue at the talks was the problem of the relationship between Soviet and German supplies. During the negotiations on the night of January 1, 1940, Stalin, pointing out that The USSR is helping Germany with its supplies, agreed to reduce the volume of Soviet orders, but insisted on a quarterly balancing of mutual deliveries, because "the Soviet side did not undertake to give Germany a loan." In response to objection of the German delegation Stalin agreed to a semi-annual balancing supplies, but all attempts by the Germans to delay the fulfillment of Soviet orders ran into firm refusal<sup>805</sup>. During the next meeting with Stalin on January 29, the German delegation again insisted on the rejection of mutual balancing of supplies, pointing out that "by credit this cannot be named, since the Soviet Union receives stamps for this, which it can put in bank and receive interest." To this, Stalin advised the German side not to count "Russians are fools. In Western Europe, Russians were considered bears who have a bad head works. Everyone who held this opinion was mistaken. Russians are not dumber than others. The Soviet side knows that Germany is not currently buying grain, oil, ore, or cotton anywhere. for stamps, but pays for it in currency", so Soviet deliveries are economic help. Because of this, the USSR "made a lot of enemies", but neither England nor France may push him off the path of friendship with Germany.

On February 5, 1940, Moscow received a letter from Ribbentrop to Stalin, in which German Foreign Minister, referring to the political and military-economic concessions to Germany in favor of the USSR, insisted on receiving from the Soviet government support "in our war with England and France by the most rapid and comprehensive deliveries of raw materials" ahead of the reciprocal German deliveries, in exchange for the provision German technical experience in the military field<sup>807</sup>. Stalin agreed to take into account wishes of Ribbentrop and on February 8, as a compromise solution, he proposed a deadline fulfillment of Soviet deliveries in 18 months, and for German ones - 32 months. At the same time, on in the first year of the agreement, supplies should be balanced every 6 months, and in second year - every 3 months. This proposal served as the basis for a compromise, and 11 February 1940 in Moscow, the Economic Agreement was signed between the USSR and Germany.

The agreement covered a period of 27 months, with Soviet supplies to be be completed in 18 months and fully covered by the German in the next 9 months. Mutual balancing of supplies was to be carried out every 6 months based on precisely defined coefficients (50% Soviet - 40% German through six months, 100% Soviet - 80% German in a year). If the German deliveries are not kept up with the coefficient of Soviet deliveries, the USSR had the right to suspend deliveries until the balance is restored. Including imports to the Protectorate, Soviet supplies should have been 650 million marks. In addition, the USSR granted Germany the right

transit to and from Romania, Iran, Afghanistan and the countries of the Far East. In addition, the Soviet Union made a promise to buy raw materials for Germany in neutral countries, which significantly reduced the possibility of an Anglo-French economic blockade of Germany. This was well understood by the economic representatives of Germany in Moscow. So, in a memorandum on the German-Soviet trade agreement, Schnurre's adviser noted that this "agreement means a wide open door to the East. Purchases of raw materials in the USSR and in countries bordering it can still be significantly increased. But it is extremely important to fulfill German obligations within the limits required. In view of the large volume, this will require special efforts. If we succeed in increasing and expanding exports to the East to the required volume, then the effect of the English blockade will be significantly weakened by the future influx of raw

materials" 809. At the same time, the agreement on balancing mutual deliveries gave the USSR the opportunity to delay its deliveries if the German schedule was violated. This happened already at the end of March 1940, when the Germans delayed the supply of coal, and the USSR, in response, from April 1, stopped the supply of grain and oil. On April 5, Germany asked to resume deliveries, promising to fulfill its own, but the USSR rejected this request 810. However, it is possible that in this case it was not so much about economic as about political reasons.

The supply of raw materials to Germany, propaganda of Soviet-German friendship, condemnation of England and France as warmongers, and pacifist propaganda through the Comintern naturally irritated the Western allies and fueled the impatience of those who declared war on the USSR. The outbreak of the Soviet-Finnish war gave the Western allies an excellent opportunity to inflict damage on both Germany and the USSR. The occupation of Scandinavia by England and France would weaken the strategic positions of Germany, depriving it of supplies of Swedish iron ore, and intervention in the Soviet-Finnish war would allow the USSR to be drawn into the war "at worst on the side of Germany, at best ... one on one against everything bourgeois world, including Germany. As early as December 2, 1939, the United States imposed a "moral embargo" on the supply of aviation equipment and technology to the USSR. Under pressure from the United States and France, on December 14, 1939, the USSR was expelled from the League of Nations, and on December 16, a resolution was adopted calling on the members of this organization to provide assistance to Finland, which allowed the Western

allies to launch preparations for military operations against the USSR 812 on February 5, 1940. The Allied Council decided to send an expeditionary force to Finland through the Norwegian ports, and on the same day a police raid on the Soviet trade mission was carried out in Paris, but Moscow limited itself to protest 813. The Soviet-German trade agreement of February 11, 1940 caused new fears in England and France regarding a possible Soviet-German alliance 814. anti-Soviet publications. However, the Soviet leadership was not going to let events take their course, but decided to use England's interest expressed on January 30 in clarifying the exact nature of Soviet-German relations 814. On February 16 in Moscow, during a conversation with a member of the British House of Commons S. Cripps, Molotov stated that "if the British government would really like to have good relations with us, then we would willingly go to meet this. On the same day, England asked the USSR if the new Soviet-German economic agreement did not signify the formalization of an alliance between Moscow and Berlin. On February 22, 1940, the

USSR notified England that the Soviet leadership considered "ridiculous and insulting to us not only the assertion, but even the simple assumption that the USSR allegedly entered into a military alliance with Germany." The economic agreement with Germany "is just a trade agreement, according to which the export from the USSR to Germany reaches only 500 million marks, and the agreement is economically beneficial to the USSR, since the USSR receives from Germany a large number of machine tools and equipment, as well as a fair amount of weapons, in selling something to us invariably

refused both in England and in France. "Assurances that the Soviet Union continues to remain neutral in a European war, were received with "satisfaction" in England<sup>817</sup> On February 27, Moscow notified London that "the USSR, as a neutral country, led and will conduct its foreign trade with both belligerent and neutral countries, based on their needs." The Soviet-German trade agreement is his "an internal affair and not a subject of negotiation with third countries." Reproaching England for violation of the trade agreement with the USSR in the autumn of 1939, the Soviet government agreed to "restore trade relations" with her for the import of goods into the USSR, and not for re-export them to other countries, but such an agreement would not be concluded in damage "trade obligations of each of the parties in relation to other countries." the best the condition for the start of trade negotiations, the Soviet side considered the release Soviet ships "Selenga" and "Mayakovsky" detained by the British<sup>818</sup>

The threat of Anglo-French intervention in the Soviet-Finnish war forced the Soviet leadership, on the one hand, to speed up the end of the war with Finland, and on the other is to demonstrate equal neutrality in relation to the participants in the European war. Therefore, in late February - early March 1940, there was some cooling Soviet-German relations. It all started with little things. At first there were difficulties with visas for Germans, then delays in the transfer of Germans in Soviet prisons to Germany, and finally, on March 5, the Soviet side announced that the use of the Nord base difficult until the end of the Finnish events<sup>819</sup> At the same time, Germany informed the USSR about its negotiations with Italy, and Moscow notified Berlin of the progress of negotiations with Finland, but refused to provide Germany with bases for the fleet in Kamchatka<sup>820</sup>

The beginning of the Soviet-Finnish peace negotiations led to the fact that the anti-Soviet sentiments in the West lost an important source of nourishment, and this played into the hands of the USSR. 18 March England again declared its desire to resume trade negotiations with the USSR, but continued to detain Soviet ships, especially in the Far East<sup>821</sup> March 19 France demanded the recall of the Soviet plenipotentiary, who was recalled on March 26 to Moscow<sup>822</sup>. On March 27, the USSR expressed its readiness to begin trade negotiations with England under the condition of the release of the detained ships and the refusal to detain Soviet ships in the future. But the position of England on the question of merchant shipping remained unchanged. less outwardly in Soviet-British relations, a certain normalization,<sup>824</sup> especially since the USSR once again publicly denied rumors of a closer rapprochement with Germany and Molotov's imminent trip to Berlin. First time Germany invited Molotov to visit Berlin on October 17 for the ceremony of exchanging ratifications letters to the agreement of September 28, 1939, but the Soviet side, referring to employment Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, declined this invitation, promising that "there will be a more opportune moment has been chosen"<sup>825</sup> In March 1940, Germany again decided to return to this idea, and on March 29, Schulenburg received the task to raise, in a conversation with Molotov, the question of his possible visit to Berlin. As Schulenburg predicted, the Soviet government declined to discuss this issue, and the German Foreign Ministry gave its ambassador in Moscow an instruction not to take further initiative. However, Anglo-

Soviet contacts of an economic nature did not interfere with Western allies to continue developing anti-Soviet military plans<sup>827</sup> By the beginning of March 1940 city, as noted by V.Ya. Sipols, "the British and French military bodies were general strategic plans for an attack on the USSR from the south were developed. But agreed British and French governments of a principled political decision on there was no attack "<sup>828</sup>. Despite the cessation of the Soviet-Finnish war, the preparation attacks on the USSR continued. This proves once again that these Anglo-French developments had a rather relative connection with the conflict in the North of Europe, and based on their long-term military strategy. Seeking to strangle Germany economic blockade, England and France continued to prepare for the establishment control over Scandinavia and the destruction of Soviet oil fields in the Caucasus.



At the same time, they tried to get consent from Turkey, Iran and Japan to participate in the anti-Soviet war.

On March 28, England and France again discussed their military strategy and decided to mine Norwegian territorial waters in order to complicate the delivery of Swedish iron ore to Germany. However, the opinions of the parties differed on the issue of the bombing of Baku. While France insisted on accelerating this action, England took a more evasive position, fearing a Soviet-German alliance. In addition, the position of England was influenced by the fact that Turkey and Iran evaded interference in the struggle of the great powers, and the USSR, knowing about the common intentions of the Western allies, proposed on March 27 to improve relations with London. As a result, it was decided to continue preparations for an airstrike in the Caucasus, so that "the operation could be carried out without delay, if an appropriate decision was made"<sup>829</sup>. It was necessary to strengthen the blockade of the USSR, especially in the Far East, and to delay the response to the Soviet offer of trade negotiations until the issue of the bombing of Baku was resolved.

Although Moscow did not know all the details of the preparation of the Anglo-French actions in the Caucasus, the available information made it possible to note the growing threat to the southern borders of the USSR. Therefore, on March 29, speaking at a meeting of the Supreme Soviet, Molotov declared that "any attempts of this kind would cause retaliatory measures on our part against the aggressors, and the danger of such a game with fire should be completely obvious to the powers hostile to the USSR and to those of our neighbors who will prove to be an instrument of this aggressive policy against the USSR. In addition to these rather serious warnings, the Soviet side also took concrete military measures. As early as December 31, 1939, the People's Commissar of Defense ordered to strengthen the troops of the Transcaucasian Military District (ZakVO) by infantry was transferred to calling up reservists over January 10, 1940, the 31st peacetime Baku<sup>831</sup>. division from the North Caucasian Military District (SKVO)<sup>832</sup>. Since February 20, the command of the Soviet Air Force has been developing measures to

strengthen the air defense of Baku<sup>833</sup>. From March 25 to March 29, a bilateral operational game on cards was held with the highest and senior commanders of the ZakVO on the territory of the East Anatolian and Advanced Iranian theater of operations, during which the following scenario was played out: "Blacks", continuing to wage war with the "Browns" on the Western Front, joint actions with the "Blues" and "Greens" decided to move on to open actions against the "Reds". According to the plan of the game, the "Blues" concentrated troops to the border by mid-June and invaded the territory of the "Reds" on the morning of June 16, and the "Greens" tried to do the same on June 19, but were driven back. In this situation, the Transcaucasian front of the "Reds" received the task from the morning of June 25 to go "on a decisive offensive with the task of reaching the front of Erzurum, Lake Van, Tabriz." It was necessary, interacting with the Black Sea Fleet, "to prevent the enemy from entering the eastern coast of the Black Sea from Batumi to the Psou River and from attacking his Air Force on the bases of Poti, Batumi." The Caspian military flotilla was given the task of "destroying the enemy's naval forces and the most important objects of military importance by raiding operations on enemy bases in cooperation with the air force of the front," and the 3rd air defense corps was to "prevent an attack by the enemy air force on Baku." The drawing of the actions of the "Black" and "Blue" fleets against Poti and Batumi showed that the landing of enemy troops on the coast is difficult, and only a successful

landing of small groups of saboteurs is possible. On April 2, it was decided to form the editorial office and printing house of the newspaper in English and to increase the staff of newspapers in Turkish and Iranian languages in order to decompose the enemy troops<sup>835</sup>. In early April, troops from the Finnish front began to arrive in Transcaucasia. According to the directive of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 0/2/104044ss of April 10, by April 27, the ZakVO included the directorates of the 3rd and 23rd rifle corps, the 4th, 136th and 138th rifle, 24th cavalry divisions, 116th, 547th, 136th, 350th howitzer artillery regiments, 40th separate artillery division of special power, 335th, 18th anti-aircraft artillery regiments, 7th, 9th separate searchlight divisions, 153rd, 157th, 171st, 184th, 201st, 216th, 211th divisions of small-caliber artillery, 24th separate VNOS batta

Air defense, 388th anti-aircraft artillery division, 97th company and 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th platoons of heavy machine guns, rear and sanitary units. In addition, the 17th and 41st light tank brigades should have been formed in the district by May 25. As a result, the number of units and subunits of the district's anti-aircraft artillery increased from 6 to 37 units<sup>837</sup>. On May 15-22, the ZakVO troops conducted field trips to the Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki and Leninakan directions on the topic "Concentration and deployment of a reinforced rifle corps on a wide front in the initial period of the war in mountainous areas with a subsequent transition to the offensive"<sup>838</sup>.

As early as March 4, the command of the Red Army Air Force received instructions from the General Staff that "SAVO, ZakVO and OdVO are of particular operational importance", and began to prepare to provide these districts with the necessary material and technical means and ammunition "for 1 month of combat work"<sup>839</sup>. Until April 1940, the ZakVO Air Force consisted of the 60th air brigade (36th, 45th, 50th fighter regiments), the 5th long-range reconnaissance squadron, the 6th reconnaissance squadron and the 30th separate air defense detachment. In April May 1940, the offices of the 3rd, 17th and 64th air brigades and 9 air regiments were transferred to the district: the 25th, 68th fighter, 18th, 41st medium bomber, 6th, 42 -th long-range bomber from the North-Western Front, 35th fighter - from BOVO, 133rd fighter - from MVO, 12th long-range bomber - from SKVO. In addition, the directorate of the 45th air brigade, the 82nd, 84th fighter and 83rd long-range bomber regiments were formed in the ZakVO. Accordingly, the district Air Force increased from 246 aircraft on March 1 to 1,023 aircraft .

on June 1840 In accordance with the order of the People's Commissar of Defense and the Chief of the General Staff, the Air Force Commander ordered on April 9 and 11 the long-range bomber air regiments of the ZakVO and OdVO "to begin studying the Middle East theater of operations, paying special attention to the following objects": Alexandria, Beirut, Haifa, Alexandretta, Port Said, Nicosia, Larnaca, Famagusta, Aleppo, Suez Canal, Istanbul, Izmid, Sinop, Samsun, Trebizond, Mudaniya, Smyrna, Gallipoli, Ankara, Kirikale, the Bosphorus and Dardanelles. It was necessary in strict secrecy to work out possible routes, bomb load and conduct 2 training flights over its territory with a range and navigation conditions corresponding to the Middle East theater of operations, including bombing and air battles with meeting fighters<sup>841</sup>. On April 7, the Air Force Command asked the NPO Intelligence Directorate to transfer to the Air Force Headquarters materials on the Mosul-Kerkuk region, including those that can be obtained in Berlin through the Air Force Attache. On April 23, reconnaissance materials "on objects in Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Palestine for a thorough study by the flight personnel" of the units were sent to the headquarters of the ZakVO from the 5th Directorate of the NPO. Transferred on May 25 to the headquarters of the Air Force of the district, these materials contained maps, plans, diagrams, photographs of the districts of Istanbul, Tabriz, Qazvin, Bag

As a result of all these measures, the number of ZakVO troops increased from February 15 to July 1, 1940 by 3.2 times. The list of troops of the district, which amounted to 86,771 people on April 1, increased to 307,961 people by May 1, and to 320,128 people by June 1843. in the .

Caucasus. It was planned to prepare a single Anglo-French plan, which was to be submitted to the governments for consideration. However, the German invasion of Denmark and Norway on April 9 tied the hands of the Western Allies to a certain extent, since the available air forces did not allow the air group to be strengthened in the Middle East. At 10.30 on April 9, Schulenburg visited Molotov and told him that Germany, in order to ensure its security, decided to preempt England and France and occupy Denmark and Norway. Berlin promised that "the territories of Sweden and Finland will in no case be affected by our action." Molotov replied that the Soviet government understood "the actions of the German government, since, apparently, England had gone too far with respect to violating the neutrality of Norway and Denmark. Not

it is possible that England was really preparing to occupy the coast of Norway and Denmark. Therefore, Germany's measures against Norway and Denmark should be considered forced." To the question of Schulenburg, "are the rumors about trade negotiations" between the USSR and England, Molotov, referring to the facts of the detention of Soviet ships by the Western allies, replied negative 844 . The

beginning of the fighting in Scandinavia eliminated the crisis that arose in the Soviet-German relationships. On April 9, Molotov declared that "the economic bodies of the USSR are somewhat overdid it by suspending the shipment of goods to Germany, in particular oil and grain." Although Germany itself delayed the supplies promised to the USSR, Goering's assurances that "delays will be eliminated" allow the Soviet side to resume their deliveries. In addition, a number of smaller issues were resolved. "Mr. Molotov was herself courtesy, Schulenburg reported to Berlin. - I must confess that absolutely amazed at such a change "845. Apparently, the beginning of the fighting in Norway convinced the Soviet government that there would be no collusion between Germany and England, and the Western allies connected by fighting in Scandinavia. Consequently, the threat of involving the USSR in the war decreased, which allowed to normalize relations with Germany. At the same time, Molotov on April 13 told Schulenburg that the Soviet government was "definitely interested in preserving neutrality of Sweden" and "expresses the wish that Swedish neutrality should not be violated." Germany, which did not plan to occupy Sweden, replied that it did not interested in violating Swedish neutrality. In the meantime, on

April 19, 1940, England expressed its desire to resume trading negotiations with the USSR, subject to the military interests of London and guarantees against re-export of English goods to Germany. April 23 Supreme Military Council allies, revisiting the problem of an air strike on the Caucasian oil fields, stated that "the threat of attack is a reality and therefore constitutes means of pressure" on the USSR. It was decided to complete the preparation of the attack as soon as possible rather (tentative date end of June - beginning of July) and increase pressure on Turkey, in order to persuade her to participate in the anti-Soviet campaign. On 26 April Germany requested USSR, are the rumors about "Soviet-British wars being conducted at the initiative of the Soviet Union" true? trade negotiations." In response, Molotov fairly frankly described the current situation 849 . On April 29, the USSR agreed to negotiate with England on the terms reciprocity, but pointed out that the best condition for their start would be the release of detainees Soviet ships 850 . re- On May 8, 1940, England again raised the problem of a possible Soviet export of British goods to Germany and tried to clarify the nature of Soviet-German trade relations 851 . Meanwhile, France informed England that already on May 15 it will be possible to start an operation against Baku, but on May 10 Germany switched to offensive on the Western Front, and the Allies had more pressing problems.

On May 10, Schulenburg informed Molotov of the start of operations "in the West, to which Germany was forced by the Anglo-French advance through Belgium and Holland into the Ruhr region." To this, Molotov replied that "he has no doubt that the German troops able to defend Germany. The Allies will be in a difficult position" 852 . Change strategic situation in Western Europe led England to decide to probe the position of the USSR "on emerging trade and other issues" 853, hoping thereby to create tension in Soviet-German relations. May 20 1940, the Soviet side was informed of its intention to send to Moscow with "research" mission of "special commissioner" S. Cripps. Besides, in The USSR planned to appoint a new British ambassador to replace the one who left on January 2, 1940. on "vacation" by W.

Seeds 854 . But now the Soviet leadership could take a firmer stand and on May 21 stated that it was not going to subordinate its trade policy "to the military interests of this or that other foreign state" because "has the right to conduct its foreign trade both with belligerents and with neutral countries on the principles of equality of arms and

reciprocity of obligations". Moscow again assured London that it was going to buy English goods for their own needs and does not intend to discuss issues with England Soviet-German trade relations. Noting that England had violated its trade obligations towards the USSR, and the ongoing delay in resolving the issue of detained Soviet courts "does not indicate the desire" of England to alleviate trade with the USSR, Moscow announced its agreement "to conduct trade negotiations on principles of equality and mutual obligations without any direct or indirect subordinating trade negotiations to military objectives that are in conflict with the policy of neutrality of the Soviet Union"<sup>855</sup>.

On May 22, a TASS report was published summarizing the story preliminary negotiations between the USSR and Britain on the question of trade relations and contained the above response of the Soviet government. The message stated, that the fact that England had put forward "for discussion matters relating exclusively to competence of the Soviet government, does not indicate the desire of the British governments to conduct trade negotiations with the USSR "<sup>856</sup>. Naturally, England expressed dissatisfied with the publication of such a report and stated that, pending a decision on the issue of a trip to There will be no negotiations in Moscow by S. Cripps<sup>857</sup>. On May 23, England withdrew all its previous proposals regarding trade negotiations and asked for an expedited response from Moscow regarding the mission of Cripps<sup>858</sup>.

However, all attempts by England to get Moscow to accept an emergency and plenipotentiary ambassador with a special mission were in vain, since the Soviet the leadership was not going to give rise to talk "about some non-existent turn in relations between England and the USSR "<sup>859</sup>. Therefore, the Soviet leadership informed Germany of its position on the appointment of Cripps as the new English ambassador in Moscow, noting that this could in no way affect the Soviet-German relations<sup>860</sup>. As a result, England had to take into account the position of the USSR, and Cripps was accredited to Moscow as an ordinary ambassador<sup>861</sup>. In the first half of June, England and France tried to draw the USSR into a discussion of the problem of the victories of Germany European equilibrium, but Moscow referred to its neutrality and again raised the issue about the Soviet ships detained by the allies.

Meanwhile, on June 15-17, the USSR sent its troops into Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. June 17 Schulenburg informed Molotov about the Franco-German peaceful contacts, and Molotov, congratulating the ambassador on the "victories of the German army", informed him of the developments in Baltics<sup>863</sup>. On June 22, France capitulated, which further complicated the situation. England, which faced a difficult choice. An agreement with Germany would be explicit a concession to Berlin and would finally nullify the world role of England. Continuation war required the creation of a new anti-German coalition, but most of the small European countries were in a hurry to distance themselves from London, while the USA and the USSR took wait-and-see attitude, since, like Germany, they disputed the leading role of England in world arena. Therefore, the creation of a new anti-German coalition demanded from England above all to demonstrate their ability to continue the war with Germany, as well as concessions to your future partner. It is clear that the English leadership was completely not ready to discuss this problem in relation to the USSR. More relaxed in London belonged to an alliance with the United States, but Washington, on the eve of the presidential elections, although agreed on June 12 to expand military supplies to England, categorically refused enter the war with Germany.

In an effort to achieve a cooling of Soviet-German relations, England decided use new contacts with Moscow, the reason for which was the personal message of U. Churchill to Stalin. Written in pretentious tones, Churchill's message called for improvement of Soviet-British relations and offered to "consult with each other concerning those affairs in Europe which must inevitably interest us both. IN At present, the whole of Europe, including our two countries, is faced with the problem of how

the states and peoples of Europe will react to the prospect of Germany establishing hegemony over the continent"<sup>865</sup> On June 26, Cripps asked to be received by Stalin and promised keep this fact secret<sup>866</sup> The Soviet leadership, knowing about the intention of England to continue the war, which was in the interests of the USSR, decided to satisfy this request. Conversation Cripps with Stalin, which took place on July 1, 1940, is considered in detail in the works of V.Ya. Sipols on the basis of English and Soviet documents. The British ambassador announced England's desire to normalize relations, including trade, with the USSR and stabilization of "the situation in the Balkans under the auspices of the USSR". There should have been some grouping of Balkan countries, which would serve as a buffer between Germany and the Middle East, under the control of England.

This Balkan plan did not interest Stalin, but he expressed his readiness to accept England's help in improving Soviet-Turkish relations. Confirming that between the USSR and Germany has no agreement on war against England, and their relations are regulated only non-aggression pact, Stalin did not support Cripps' statements regarding German dominance in Europe and the desire of Germany to dominate the world. Noticing that he "does not always believe in what so much is shouted about", especially since Germany "does not have the strength to dominance throughout the world", Stalin pointed out that the position of Germany in Europe is difficult, as England continues to dominate the seas. Soviet leader frankly acknowledged that the USSR is not a supporter of the restoration of the former European balance that was directed against his interests, and Cripps had to declare that England "does not consider it possible to restore the old balance", and above all interested in preventing the domination of any one power. Speaking of the problem of trade negotiations, Cripps again drew Stalin's attention to England's interest in preventing the re-export of its goods to Germany. In reply Stalin informed the interlocutor of some general principles of Soviet-German trade and declared that "the treaty concluded with Germany or with anyone else, we do not violate we can, and in negotiations the British must take this circumstance into account." Cripps promised to clarify the position of his government and expressed hope for an early start Soviet-British trade negotiations. Assessing the conversation in the report to London, Cripps noted the potentially anti-German course of the USSR, which, nevertheless, "does not will do nothing that might now openly arouse sharp discontent Germany, and will not break his agreement with her "<sup>869</sup> On July 3, Churchill accepted Soviet ambassador in London and told him of England's intention to continue the war, emphasizing that the defeat of England would untie Germany's hands for a campaign against the USSR<sup>870</sup> ·

Some authors believe that the USSR should have adopted the British in the summer of 1940. proposal and begin rapprochement with England<sup>871</sup> but, this does not take into account at all the real situation and goals of the Soviet leadership. Seems to be more fair position of V.Ya. Sipols, who writes that "for the USSR in those conditions there was no question of significant improvement in relations with England. The main thing was to avoid complete rupture of contacts, keeping them in a kind of smoldering state in order to have the opportunity to revive the relationship, if and when there is an opportunity and necessity "<sup>872</sup>. Although these contacts were a certain moral support for England in her desire to continue the war, but the USSR was not going to abandon its a neutral position that has already yielded so many benefits. Moreover, England in an effort to worsen Soviet-German relations, leaked information about Anglo-Soviet contacts in Moscow. At the same time, Germany published captured secret documents of the Anglo-French allies in autumn 1939 - spring 1940 containing them anti-Soviet plans, which gave Moscow an excellent opportunity to take more cool position. On July 13, the USSR notified Germany of Stalin's meeting with Cripps, giving her information about the general content of the conversation. This fact is traditionally considered in Western, and then in domestic historiography as an example of close Soviet-German cooperation, but V.Ya. Sipols convincingly showed that this

the message was a subtle disinformation of Germany by the Soviet leadership<sup>874</sup>, which continued to maneuver between the warring parties.

In the second half of 1940, Soviet-British relations continued to be cool. Britain's policy towards the USSR was determined by the desire to achieve, at a minimum, the deterioration of Soviet-German relations, and, at the most, the entry of the USSR into the war against Germany. As before, Britain intended to use trade negotiations with the USSR in order to induce him to reduce or even stop trade with Germany, which was supposed to create a hotbed of tension in Eastern Europe. For its part, the USSR was interested in continuing the war in the West and continued to maintain common contacts with England, but at the same time Moscow was not going to act on orders from London, which, as usual, preferred not to recognize Soviet interests. Moreover, Britain and the United States took a position that was clearly hostile to the USSR on the issue of including the Baltic countries in its composition, and any contacts with Moscow were immediately inflated by the British press into almost alliance negotiations. Under these conditions, the Soviet leadership tried to limit itself to the most minimal contacts, rejecting all British proposals for consultations.

Meanwhile, Soviet-German naval cooperation continued. After the occupation of Norway, the German naval base "Nord" was moved from Zapadnaya Litsa Bay to Lokanga Bay east of Murmansk near Cape Svyatoy Nos. Back in February - March 1940, the Soviet government agreed to escort German transport along the Northern Sea Route. They became the ship "Ems", converted into a raider and received a new name "Komet". The famous Arctic hydrograph Captain 1st Rank R. Eissen commanded the ship. On July 6, a raider from Bergen set off along the Norwegian coast to the north, disguised as the Soviet icebreaker S. Dezhnev, and at the end of July anchored off about. Kolguev. In Soviet documents, it was listed as "German transport" Donau "with a military team." On August 18, the raider left the Pechora Bay to the Matochkin Shar Strait, where on August 25 he met with the icebreaker "Lenin", which led him through the Kara Sea and the Vilkitsky Strait into the Laptev Sea, where the icebreaker "I. Stalin" took over. Near the Bear Islands, the raider was met by the L. Kaganovich icebreaker, which led him through the East Siberian Sea. On September 5, the Komet sailed through the Bering Strait into the Pacific Ocean. For 17 months of navigation, he sank 9 ships with a displacement of 65 thousand tons and captured a Dutch ship with a cargo of rubber and tin, sending it to occupied Bordeaux. November 30, 1941 "Komet" returned to Hamburg. Moscow asked for 950,000 marks for escorting the raider. On September 9, 1940, Schulenburg conveyed "deep gratitude and gratitude to the Soviet government for providing strongholds on the Murmansk coast. Germany has benefited enormously from these bases. At present, the bases are no longer needed, and for the time being we refuse to use them"<sup>876</sup>. The commander of the German fleet, Grand Admiral E. Raeder, for his part, sent a letter of thanks to the Commissar of the Navy, Admiral N.G. Kuznetsov.

The defeat of France did not lead to the end of the war in Europe, as England continued to resist. Therefore, in Berlin, they proceeded from the fact that "we will probably have to demonstrate our strength to England once again before she stops the fight and unties our hands in the East"<sup>877</sup>. It was believed that if England did not agree to peace negotiations, then it should be forced to do so by a naval blockade and bombardment of the English Isles, or, in extreme cases, to carry out an amphibious landing in England. But at that time, a certain bifurcation of the German strategy emerged, since, as General F. Halder, Chief of the General Staff of the German Ground Forces, noted in his diary on July 3, "at present, the English problem, which should be developed separately, and the Eastern problem are in the foreground. the content of the latter: a method of delivering a decisive blow to Russia in order to force her to recognize the dominant role of Germany in Europe"<sup>878</sup>.

In an effort to prevent the emergence of new allies in England, Germany carefully monitored the diplomatic maneuvers of London. American support for England was no secret to anyone, as well as the fact that its size in the summer of 1940 remained more than modest, and most importantly, the United States was not going to immediately enter the war, and could not take any action against Germany, except for maritime communications. Therefore, much more attention in Berlin was paid to the positions of the USSR, not excluding the possibility of an Anglo-Soviet rapprochement based on concessions to England in the Middle East.<sup>879</sup> Discussing the situation in Europe, on July 13, Hitler noted "Russia's desire in to allow too great a strengthening of Germany" and expressed the idea that England is not seeking peace with Germany because "still hopes in Russia".<sup>880</sup> In July, Germany transferred to the East 15 divisions, notifying Moscow of this fact on July 9.<sup>881</sup> Back in late June 1940, the Western press wrote a lot about the fact that the restoration of diplomatic relations between Yugoslavia and the USSR could lead to the creation of a Soviet-Bulgarian Yugoslav bloc, which would force a potential aggressor to reckon with itself. This version, which was also actively used by British intelligence, was accepted in Berlin, where it was believed that although "during Stalin's negotiations with Cripps, Stalin officially refrained from rapprochement with England", in the Balkans he calls for a joint struggle against Germany. On July 16, Hitler signed Directive No. 16,

containing a plan for landing in England (Operation Sea Lion), and on July 19, he publicly offered peace to England without any conditions. On July 21, the German leadership again discussed the current situation, and Hitler again called the reasons for "the continuation of the war by England" the hopes for an alliance with the USA or the USSR. In his opinion, which was formed, apparently, taking into account the message from Moscow about the reception of Cripps by Stalin, "England, obviously, is counting on the opportunity to cause unrest in the Balkans with the help of Russia and thereby take away our sources of fuel and paralyze our aviation. her attempts to turn Russia against us." The available materials show that at this time Hitler had not yet made a final conclusion about relations with the USSR. On the one hand, he spoke in favor of drawing Moscow into the anti-British coalition, and on the other hand, he stated that "Stalin is flirting with England in order to force her to continue the war and thereby tie us down in order to have time to seize what he wants to seize, but cannot "If there is peace. He wants to ensure that Germany does not become too strong. However, there are no signs of active Russian action against us." Nevertheless, the German command received an order to start preparing a plan of operation against the USSR in order to "smash the Russian land army, or at least occupy such territory so that Berlin and the Silesian industrial region could be protected from Russian air raids".<sup>883</sup>

On July 22, the British leadership rejected the Berlin peace proposal. Thus, So Germany was faced with the task of getting England out of the war, but as Operation Sea Lion developed, it became increasingly clear that the Wehrmacht did not have the capabilities to carry it out. The landing in England was made dependent on the Luftwaffe gaining air supremacy over the English Channel and the southern regions of the country, which was again noted by Hitler during a meeting on July 31, at which a preliminary date for the start of the operation was set - September 15. Further, Hitler for the first time presented to the generals as an assumption a variant of the new strategy of Germany. "We will not attack England, but we will shatter those illusions that give England the will to resist ... England's hope is Russia and America. If hopes for Russia collapse, America will also fall away from England, since the defeat of Russia will result in an incredible strengthening Japan in East Asia ... If Russia is defeated, England will lose her last hope. Then Germany will dominate Europe and the Balkans. Conclusion: In accordance with this reasoning, Russia must be liquidated. The deadline is the spring of 1941." <sup>885</sup> Apparently, in Berlin they perceived the operation against the USSR from the point of view of the war with England, and although

preparations for a campaign to the East began, this did not interfere with the implementation of Operation Sea Lion in 1940. On August 5, an air attack on England began.

As the war expanded in Europe, the position of the Comintern began to change. Already in April 1940, the idea of a popular front arose again in propaganda as a stronghold of the struggle of the population of the countries occupied by Germany for freedom and independence. Accordingly, the Communist parties were to lead these popular fronts and fight not only against Anglo-French influence, but also against German domination. In June 1940, communist propaganda was supplemented by the idea of the responsibility of England and France for the expansion of the scale of the war, as well as the need to fight the invaders, which was supposed to expand and strengthen the influence of the communist parties among the masses. Communist parties were required to avoid any action that could be interpreted as cooperation with the occupiers. This problem has acquired particular urgency in connection with the attempts of the German authorities to use the PCF in their own interests. The communist parties had to explain to the population that it was they who expressed the interests of the people and fought for national interests. For only "the working class, under the leadership of the Communist Party, is capable of uniting the nation into a powerful front capable of defending its vital interests and fighting against the foreign yoke for a truly free and independent France."

Since the summer of 1940, an anti-German orientation has clearly increased in the activities of the Comintern, and the Communist Parties are given the task of fighting the accomplices of the invaders, not allowing any support for the occupiers, and carefully exploiting the discontent of the population. At the same time, the Communist Parties in England and the USA continued to work against their own bourgeoisie, in support of the population of the colonies and dependent countries. In December 1940, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia received the task of promoting national and social liberation, independence and socialism. In April 1941, the idea of a national anti-fascist front was finally formulated, which was to guide the communist parties in the occupied countries. The anti-fascist front was first of all to win national independence, and then solve the problem of the social order and, in the conditions of the euphoria of victory, eliminate their own bourgeoisie. Accordingly, from May 1941, the European Communist Parties began to work on putting this idea into practice.

The Soviet military command in deep secrecy continued to develop a plan for war with Germany and its possible allies. The introduction of Soviet military planning documents into scientific circulation showed that Germany continued to be considered as a likely enemy No. 1, despite the imitation of rapprochement with it. It is curious to note that some authors who actively denounced Stalin for his policy towards Berlin are surprised that "the pact of August 23, 1939 did not lead to changes in the strategic planning of the USSR, formulated back in 1938."<sup>887</sup> This proves once again that that in 1939-1941, it was not about the pro-German foreign policy course of Moscow, so often criticized in recent years, but only about the tactical maneuver of the Soviet leadership, which served as a cover for its goals.

In the meantime, certain problems gradually began to arise in Soviet-German relations. Having received information about the preparations for the incorporation of the Baltic states into the USSR, Ribbentrop on July 9 asked Schulenburg to inform Molotov that the German government intended to deal with the resettlement of Germans from Lithuania, after the completion of the resettlement from Estonia and Latvia. This resettlement action "excludes a strip of territory that will be annexed to Germany when the German-Lithuanian border is changed according to the Moscow agreements of September 1939." Berlin, as previously agreed, reserved "to itself the determination of the moment of annexation of this territory to Germany" and hoped that the military measures of the USSR would not extend to this territory. At the same time, Moscow's attention was drawn to the importance for Germany of economic ties with the Baltic states and the need to take into account the interests of the Germans living there. Regarding the transfer of the property of immigrants to the Reich, the German side proposed to leave it in the Baltic states, and receive compensation by deliveries of goods from the USSR<sup>888</sup>



On July 13, Molotov told Schulenburg that Germany's claims to a strip of Lithuanian territory and the USSR's obligation to cede it remained in force, but, given the current situation, this would be difficult. Therefore, Stalin and Molotov "asked the German government to discuss whether it could not find a way to refuse this small one. Transferring this request to Lithuania"<sup>889</sup> to use it for the Berlin, Schulenburg offered to use a piece of the territory of implementation of German economic and financial demands on the Baltic states. On July 14-15, elections were held in the Baltics, and on July 21-22, Soviet power was proclaimed and economic transformations began, but on July 29, Molotov assured Schulenburg that the interests of the Germans living in the Baltics would be taken into account, and the nationalization law would not apply to their property. In addition, Molotov said that "the Soviet Union in general assumes responsibility for the Baltic countries, since they will enter the USSR in the near future", and asked all questions of interest to Germany in the Baltic to be discussed in Moscow<sup>890</sup>.

On August 7, Schulenburg informed Molotov that "the German government took note of the desire of the Soviet government that Germany leave behind the Soviet Union the part of Lithuania assigned to Germany by the Moscow agreements. This represents a significant change in the Moscow treaty to the disadvantage of Germany. As soon as the German government considers this question in detail, we would be interested to know what the Soviet government would propose. Molotov declared that "the Soviet government does not refuse to its discuss the question of compensation"<sup>891</sup> in return and will soon communicate proposals<sup>892</sup>. Meanwhile, on August 3-6, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia became part of the USSR. On August 12, in a conversation with Schulenburg, Molotov told him that "territorial compensation for the USSR is unacceptable, but expressed his readiness to pay 3,860,000 gold dollars for the retention of this territory by the Soviet Union for two years, in gold or goods of Germany's choice" <sup>893</sup>. On September 10, the German government expressed its readiness to give up a strip of Lithuanian territory for appropriate compensation, but the proposed compensation did not suit it, and counter-proposals began to be developed in Berlin. The question has been put on hold for now. In the meantime, the

problem of the Lithuanian free zone of the Memel port arose, which was created for 99 years under the German-Lithuanian agreement of May 20, 1939. Germany expected that with the entry of Lithuania into the USSR, the activity of the zone would be curtailed, and on August 27 sent troops into it, stopped the activities of customs and offered to take out all Lithuanian goods. All this affected the interests of the Lithuanian SSR and caused a negative reaction in Moscow. On August 29, Molotov handed the German ambassador a verbal note in which he stated that "the Lithuanian SSR retains all those rights and benefits that are stipulated by the above German-Lithuanian agreement with the exchange of letters between Mr. Schnurre and Mr. Norkaitis of the same date and which cannot be terminated by a unilateral act". From a positive solution to this issue, in the opinion of the Soviet government, normal economic relations between Germany and the Baltic States depended. On September 6, Ribbentrop pointed out to Schulenburg that the German government "could not cede the free port area at Memel to the Soviet government. This issue will be discussed with the Soviet government separately"<sup>896</sup>.

Much more serious were the disagreements on the Balkan problems, which manifested themselves in connection with the Second Vienna Arbitration, negotiations regarding the resettlement of Germans from Bessarabia, and Moscow's desire to take part in the work of the Danube Commission. Diplomatic discussions on these issues led to the fact that on September 19, 1940, Hitler "decided not to grant Russia any more European area" <sup>897</sup>. In addition, Moscow was worried about the revival of German-Finnish relations, which led to the signing of an agreement on September 23, according to which, in exchange for arms supplies, Finland agreed to let German troops through its territory into northern Norway. Since at that time the parties were clarifying the issue of whether the actions of Germany during the Second Vienna Arbitration were in line with the non-aggression pact, Berlin did not inform Moscow in advance

agreement with Finland, although it was originally planned to do so. The Japanese-German negotiations on strengthening the "anti-Comintern" pact, which began in June 1940, were interrupted in August 1939, and the German-Italian negotiations led to the signing on September 27 of an agreement on the economic and military-political union of Germany, Italy and Japan (Triple Pact ).

On the evening of September 26, Molotov received a message from the German government about the forthcoming signing of the Tripartite Pact, directed "exclusively against democratic warmongers" in order to "reason the elements striving to lengthen and expand the war." The countries participating in the treaty agreed that it would not affect their relations with the USSR, including a special article in the treaty saying "that the political status that exists between each of the three contracting powers and the Soviet Union is not affected by this treaty." In addition, Ribbentrop's intention was reported to "address a personal letter to Mr. I.V. Stalin", which would set out Germany's point of view on the current political situation and would contain an invitation to Molotov to Berlin for negotiations. For his part, Molotov, referring to Art. 4 of the Non-Aggression Treaty on the non-participation of the parties in coalitions hostile to each other, "expressed the desire to familiarize himself with the text of the treaty itself and its additional secret articles, if any." Further, referring to information about the signing of the German-Finnish agreement and the landing of German troops in Finland, the Soviet side declared its desire "to receive information about this treaty, about its goals, as well as its full text and additional secret articles, if any"<sup>898</sup>

Meanwhile, on September 30, the Pravda newspaper published an editorial written by Molotov "The Berlin Pact: On the Triple Alliance", which stated the formation of two warring groups (Germany, Italy, Japan - England, USA) and the further expansion of the war "with the transformation of it into the world imperialist war." The article expressed doubt as to whether "the parties to the pact will be able to put into effect" the division of spheres of influence between them. This "will depend on the real balance of forces between the belligerents, on the course and outcome of a real, increasingly escalating war." It is clear that Molotov noted with satisfaction "the respect on the part of the participants in the pact for the position of neutrality that the Soviet Union has been holding from the first days of the war" and "the confirmation of the strength and significance" of the Soviet-German and Soviet-Italian non-aggression pacts. At the same time, the striving of the USSR, "because it will depend on it," to preserve its policy of peace and neutrality was confirmed.

On October 4, Germany notified the USSR that there were no secret agreements between the participants in the Pact of Three, and the German-Finnish agreement was a purely military-technical transport issue that had no "political significance." On October 10, Berlin informed Moscow that a German military mission with training units had been sent to Romania<sup>900</sup>. Meanwhile, the Luftwaffe's air offensive against England had failed. On September 14, Hitler was forced to state that, "despite all the successes, the prerequisites for Operation Sea Lion have not yet been created" and the start of the operation was postponed to September 27. On September 17, the operation was postponed indefinitely, and on October 12 it was finally postponed to the spring of 1941, if "the intention to land in England reappears." Thus, the operation "Sea Lion" gradually became a means of "military-political pressure on England". France, the USSR and small countries of South-Eastern Europe. Accordingly, in October - November 1940, Germany held negotiations with Spain, France and achieved the accession to the Tripartite Pact of Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. Along with these events are the Soviet-German negotiations in Berlin in November 1940.

On October 17, Moscow received a letter from Ribbentrop to Stalin dated October 13, in which he, drawing the attention of the Soviet leadership to the fact that "the consistent continuation of the policy of good-neighborly relations and the further strengthening of political and economic cooperation will contribute even greater benefits to the two great peoples in the future", made review of events for the year. Blaming England and France for the outbreak and expansion of the war, Ribbentrop argued that "Germany intends to wage war against England and her empire until the final defeat of Britain" and that the war was "already won." The letter contained a reassuring explanation of the meaning of German measures in Scandinavia and the Balkans, where Soviet interests continue to be taken into account, and the conclusion of the Tripartite Pact. In conclusion, Ribbentrop stated that the European Axis powers, Japan and the USSR could well create a single political coalition, which would be extremely beneficial to all interested powers. Therefore, "the historical task of the Four Powers is to harmonize their long-term political goals and, by delimiting their spheres of interests on a world scale, direct the future of their peoples along the right path." The German government invited Molotov to come to Berlin for negotiations. Ribbentrop also expressed the hope that he would still be able to visit Moscow "to sum up with you, my dear Mr. Stalin, the exchange of opinions and discuss, perhaps together with the representatives of Japan and Italy, the principles of a policy that could bring practical benefits to all of us." 902 . On the evening of October 19, Schulenburg was informed that Stalin's answer would apparently be transmitted on October 21, while the

question of Molotov's trip to Berlin, which would be undertaken at the invitation of the German government, "will be decided immediately after the Soviet public holidays, which fall on November 7 and 8" 903 . On the evening of October 21, Molotov handed Schulenburg a letter from Stalin to Ribbentrop. In his reply, Stalin thanked the German Foreign Minister for his confidence and for the "instructive analysis of recent events" contained in his letter. Stalin supported Ribbentrop's point of view that "it is quite possible to further improve relations between our states, based on a solid basis for delimiting our interests for a long time." The Soviet government accepted Molotov's invitation to Berlin, where he could arrive on November 10-12, and expressed the hope that Ribbentrop's desire to visit Moscow again would soon be fulfilled. Discussing issues jointly with Japan and Italy, Stalin considered premature 904. For their part, Britain and the United States tried to block the improvement in Soviet-Japanese relations that had begun in the summer of 1940, but, naturally, Moscow was not going to act to the detriment of its own interests.

The creation of the German-Italian-Japanese alliance and Germany's attempts to expand it at the expense of other European countries, including the USSR, were taken just as seriously in London. The Soviet leadership, dissatisfied with Germany's actions in Romania, on October 16 proposed to England a much broader trade agreement than that discussed so far, and on October 19 denied rumors that Moscow was preparing to convene a conference of the USSR, Germany, Italy and Japan. In response, the British leadership, seeking to keep the USSR from a possible rapprochement with Germany, approved Cripps' idea of offering Moscow a "broad" agreement. On October 22, Cripps handed over to the Soviet side a communiqué from the British government, which reported that the German invasion had been thwarted and the British troops themselves intended to intensify hostilities, but the general situation was such that the war could not be extended to new territories. Since England is confident of her ultimate victory, she is interested in ascertaining the nature of the neutrality of other powers, given that "benevolent neutrality can be almost as valuable as armed assistance", and will allow the British government "to express its gratitude at the end of the war to those" who assisted him, and to involve them in the development of a new post-war international order.

England drew the attention of the USSR to facts proving that Germany and her allies no longer took into account Soviet interests and were unlikely to do so in case of their victory. Noting that the British government was not asking the USSR to enter the war on its side, England offered to agree on secret cooperation. The USSR would undertake to maintain benevolent neutrality with respect to England, Turkey and Iran, to continue to help China, not to conclude an agreement with Japan that would give her a free hand in expanding the war in the Pacific, to conclude a trade agreement with England, and then a non-aggression pact. For its part, England would take upon itself the obligation to consult with the USSR on questions of the post-war system, "after the end of the war not to organize or enter into any alliance directed against" it, to recognize de facto Soviet power in the territories that became part of the USSR in 1939-1940, develop Anglo-Soviet trade and provide expert assistance to strengthen the defense capability of the USSR and guarantee the security of Soviet borders with Turkey and Iran<sup>905</sup>. Of course, information about this proposal soon found its way into the British press, which allowed Moscow to give a negative answer on November 11<sup>906</sup>. Subsequently, Anglo-Soviet relations again assumed the character of mutual soundings of a general nature.

The main attention in historiography is paid to clarifying the issue of the goals of the parties at the negotiations in Berlin. Most authors believe that Germany hoped to achieve the neutrality of the USSR while subjugating the Balkans and to lull the vigilance of the Soviet leadership on the eve of the war by drawing it into negotiations on the Tripartite Pact<sup>907</sup> final conclusion on the prospects for German-Soviet relations, and Hitler hoped that "he would be able to draw Russia into the united anti-British front"<sup>909</sup>. In addition, Germany hoped to clarify issues related both to the general policy in the world and to the relations of the USSR with Afghanistan and Iran; British attempts at rapprochement with the USSR; Finnish and Romanian problems. In the economic plan, it was supposed to touch upon the course of the Soviet-German economic negotiations being held in Moscow; issues of the Lithuanian territory and the free port zone in Memel. Moreover, in the first case, economic compensation was required, and in the second, recognition by the USSR of the abolition of this zone. The German government intended to clear up the difficulties in negotiations on compensations for the settlers from the Baltics and Bessarabia and hoped to terminate the activities of the diplomatic missions in Kaunas and Tallinn ahead of schedule, but to achieve the preservation of the permanent mission in Riga, especially since the USSR still had not withdrawn its consulates from Oslo and Brussels<sup>910</sup>.

There is a strong opinion in historiography that the Soviet side tried to use the negotiations in order to declare their interests and delay entry into the war<sup>911</sup>. However, the introduction into scientific circulation of the text of the "Directives" of the Soviet delegation at the negotiations shows that the main goal of the negotiations, the Soviet leadership considered to clarify the real intentions of Germany and its allies in the creation of a "New Europe" and the "East Asian space", clarifying the nature, stages and timing of implementation these plans, the prospects for other countries to join the Tripartite Pact, and the place of the USSR in these plans. In addition, it was necessary "to prepare an initial outline of the sphere of interests of the USSR in Europe, as well as in near and middle Asia, probing the possibility of an agreement on this with Germany ... but not to conclude any agreement ... at this stage of negotiations, meaning continuation of these negotiations in Moscow, where Ribbentrop is to arrive shortly." It was necessary to ensure that Finland, the mouth of the Danube, Bulgaria were assigned to the sphere of interests of the USSR, to declare the presence of Soviet interests in Svalbard, in Sweden, in relation to the Baltic Straits, in Hungary, Romania, Turkey, Iran. It was necessary to clarify the question of the existence of Anglo-German contacts, the possible Soviet mediation in the Sino-Japanese war, the fate of Poland and economic problems. If the negotiations developed in the spirit of Soviet wishes, it would be necessary "to propose a peaceful action in the form of an open declaration of the 4

powers ... on the terms of the preservation of the British Empire (without mandated territories) with all those possessions that England now owns, and on the condition of non-interference in the affairs of Europe and the immediate withdrawal from Gibraltar and Egypt, as well as the obligation of the immediate return to Germany of her former colonies " 912 .

It seems that the authors who believe that the talks were considered by both sides as political soundings<sup>913</sup>, which, depending on the position of the parties, could take on a more serious character<sup>914</sup> are more right. In any case, Directive No. 18, approved by Hitler on November 12, 1940, which is usually regarded as evidence of the disinformation nature of the negotiations on the part of Germany, shows that the German leadership at that moment was preoccupied with several military and political problems. It intended to involve France in the anti-English coalition, involve Spain and Portugal in the war (operations to capture Gibraltar and defend the Canaries and Azores), support the Italian offensive in North Africa, prepare an operation against Northern Greece (through the territory of Bulgaria, which should have been involved in the Triple pact), continue to develop a plan for war with the USSR and be ready for the possible implementation of Operation Sea Lion in the spring of 1941.<sup>915</sup> That is, at that moment the German strategy was clearly at a crossroads.

The course of negotiations on November 12-14, 1940 is quite well known from German and Soviet documents and was repeatedly described in studies<sup>916</sup>, limiting What allow themselves to their general characteristics. Initially, the Soviet delegation had the impression that it was possible to reach an agreement with Germany in general, but later it became clear that on specific issues of Eastern and Southeastern Europe the interests of the parties were diametrically opposed. It has become a tradition in historiography to assert that Germany offered the USSR to join the Tripartite Pact, but, as V.Ya. Sipols, it was about the conclusion of a new quadripartite agreement between Germany, Italy, Japan and the USSR. True, the fact that in the end it was proposed to discuss this idea through the usual diplomatic channels, and not, as originally expected, during a possible

Ribbentrop's visit to Moscow testified to a certain dissatisfaction of the German side with the progress of the negotiations. But officially, the parties continued to demonstrate friendship<sup>917</sup>. On November 19, it was brought to the attention of Moscow that Hitler was satisfied with the negotiations and the idea of an agreement with the USSR was quite real.

Considering that England feared further Soviet-German rapprochement, the USSR on November 16 publicly refuted statements by the American press that Japan had offered the USSR "all or part of British India if the Soviet Union joined the coalition. On November 17, powers"<sup>919</sup>. Moscow notified its ambassador in London that "questions about the three delimitation of spheres of interest between the USSR, Germany and other countries, as well as questions about the accession of the USSR to the three-power pact in Berlin were not resolved", "no treaty was signed in Berlin". In addition, it was reported that the USSR would not cooperate with Germany in the Near and Middle East.<sup>920</sup> This statement somewhat smoothed over British fears regarding the creation of a German-Soviet alliance.

After discussing the results of the negotiations, on November 25, the Soviet leadership notified Berlin of its agreement to accept the draft four-power pact on political cooperation and mutual economic assistance on the following conditions, which were to be recorded in secret protocols. First, the German troops must immediately leave Finland, and the USSR guarantees peaceful relations with this country and the protection of German economic interests. Secondly, an agreement on mutual assistance between the USSR and Bulgaria should be concluded in the near future, and naval bases with garrisons in the Bosphorus and Dardanelles region should be created to accommodate Soviet troops. Thirdly, the zone south of the Baku-Batumi line "towards the Persian Gulf is recognized as the center of territorial aspirations" of the USSR. Fourth, Japan must give up its rights to oil and coal concessions in North Sakhalin. It was also proposed to change the draft secret protocol regarding Turkey. If she joins

the Four Power Pact, Germany, Italy and the USSR guarantee its sovereignty and territorial integrity. If it refuses to do so, then these countries "jointly develop and practically apply military and diplomatic sanctions". Molotov expressed hope for a speedy response from the German government.

Most researchers believe that since these Soviet conditions were unacceptable to Germany, they were a veiled refusal of the Soviet leadership from the agreement<sup>922</sup> According to V.K. Volkov, the Soviet leadership believed that "Germany harbors no aggressive intentions against the USSR", and, having decided to carry out the intention of the Pact four powers, "Stalin offered Hitler victory" in the war, putting forward rather modest, compared to winning the war, demands<sup>923</sup>. However, this rather bold hypothesis is not supported by any documents. Most likely, putting forward their own conditions, the Soviet leadership sought to test Germany's readiness to implement its own proposals, which was supposed to show the real intentions of Berlin regarding Moscow. This is confirmed by a direct indication from Molotov: "On this we had to test whether they really want to improve relations with us, or it will immediately come across to emptiness, to empty talk. It turned out that they did not want to cede anything to us ... We, with for their part, had to probe him (Hitler) as deeply as possible with him talk seriously. Agreed to perform - do not perform. We see that they do not want fulfill. We had to draw conclusions, and they, of course, drew conclusions "... "He (Hitler) wanted to draw us into an adventure, but, on the other hand, I also failed to get him concessions in terms of Finland and Romania"<sup>924</sup>.

From the point of view of the German leadership, the price of cooperation with the USSR was too great. According to Hitler, "Stalin is smart and cunning. He demands more and more. From the point of view of Russian ideology, the victory of Germany is unacceptable. Solution: Defeat Russia As Possible earlier. In 2 years the British may have 40 divisions. This may encourage Russia to joint action with England"<sup>925</sup> In the fair opinion of a number of authors, in response to this Soviet proposal was the approval by Hitler on December 18 of Directive No. 21 "Plan Barbarossa "<sup>926</sup>, which was supposed to attack the USSR on May 16, 1941 and at lightning speed crush him.

At the end of 1940, the USSR intensified its relations with Italy so that, on the one hand, side, try to use the friction between Rome and Berlin to expand Soviet influence in the Balkans, and on the other hand, to test the honesty of Hitler, referring to the need to take into account the opinion of Mussolini in relation to the Balkan-Black Sea problems. However, Soviet-Italian contacts December 1940 - February 1941 showed that Italy does not play an independent role in the German-Italian alliance and it will not be possible to play on their contradictions, and confirmed that Soviet interests in the Balkans and will continue to be taken into account only in words<sup>927</sup> In November 1940 - March 1941, Soviet-German contradictions clearly emerged in the Balkans. Although the official response from Berlin did not follow the Soviet proposal, a kind of "litmus test" real intentions of Germany was the situation around Bulgaria. Despite Moscow's direct statements about Soviet interests, Germany ignored them, by securing Bulgaria's accession to the Tripartite Pact. Apparently, this clearly showed to the Soviet leadership that its interests in Europe are not recognized by Berlin, and on March 11, 1941 in the new operational plan of the Red Army in case of war with Germany was established the specific date for its start is June 12, 1941. This, however, did not prevent Moscow from continuing diplomatic struggle in the Balkans and at the same time demonstrate normal relationship with Berlin. So, March 21 - April 17, 1941 the German military-technical the delegation was shown several Soviet aircraft factories, which should have demonstrate, on the one hand, trust, and on the other, the strength of the USSR<sup>928</sup>.

At the Soviet-German negotiations on the conclusion of a border treaty in the Baltic the problem arose of Soviet compensation to Germany for abandoning the strip of Lithuanian territory. As compensation, Berlin insisted on additional Soviet

deliveries of non-ferrous metals, but Moscow, although it doubled the amount of compensation previously offered to 31.5 million marks, said that "the non-ferrous metals already promised in the economic agreement will have to be taken from national reserves, and the supply of even more will be difficult." Nevertheless, the German government tried to achieve a one-time supply of non-ferrous metals, or was willing to accept half of this amount in gold, and the second - in non-ferrous metals. On January 8, the Soviet side proposed two options for resolving the issue of compensation. The first option provided for the payment of the entire amount in gold, by mutual settlements, with a deduction from the amount of German payments. The second option provided for the supply of non-ferrous metals for 1/8 of the amount within 3 months and the payment of 7/8 of the amount in gold through settlement from German payments. As a result, Berlin agreed to the second decision, and on January 10, Schulenburg and Molotov signed an agreement in Moscow on the Soviet-German border from the river. Igorka to the Baltic Sea, which confirmed the transfer of Memel to Germany<sup>929</sup>.

On the same day, an expanded economic agreement was signed that regulated trade between the USSR and Germany until August 1, 1942, according to which mutual deliveries were to be 620-640 million marks, including 141.33 million marks for Soviet military orders. German deliveries did not begin again simultaneously with the Soviet ones, but from May 11, 1941. During the economic negotiations that began on August 28, 1940, it turned out that the Soviet side, using the fact that German deliveries lagged behind the Soviet ones, abandoned some of their orders with long terms supplies. Basically, the USSR sought to limit itself to orders that could be completed within 8-10 months, that is, before July 1941. Here we should dwell on the problems of Soviet-German economic relations in 1939-1941, which were regulated by agreements of August 19, 1939, February 11, 1940 and January 10, 1941, expanding and complementing each other<sup>930</sup>. In recent years, Russian historiography has uncritically accepted the version of Western researchers that at the beginning of World War II, Soviet supplies were almost the only pillar of the German economy. However, the materials introduced into scientific circulation in recent years show that these agreements were beneficial for both parties. Table 20 The share of the great powers in Soviet foreign trade (%)<sup>931</sup> Of course, the foreign trade of the USSR underwent more significant

changes

than Germany's, but this was due not so much to Moscow's

intentions as to the discriminatory actions of England, France, and later the United States.

To a certain extent, this predetermined the Soviet interest in developing trade with Germany, from where Soviet industry received a large assortment of machine tools, equipment and other industrial goods, which made it possible to strengthen and modernize the Soviet

industrial base. Agricultural supplies, such as breeding stock, seeds of high-yielding crops, also came from Germany. Unfortunately, consolidated data on commodity deliveries to the USSR have not yet been published. According to historians from Germany, German deliveries covered the Soviet ones by only 57-61%. The deliveries of component metal products, machines, electrical appliances, etc. were not fully completed. In general, the share of German supplies to the USSR in the total volume of German exports in 1940. Nevertheless, in 1940 it first half of 1941 - 6.6%<sup>932</sup>. Soviet imports of ferrous metals to Germany accounted for 83.7%, coal - 100%, machinery and equipment - 41.7%, machine tools - 51.9%, forging and pressing equipment - 14.7%, power and electrical equipment - 29.8%, crushing, grinding and processing equipment - 58.8%, communication equipment - 54%, tractors and spare parts for them - 79.9%, chemical products - 59.5%, ships and ship equipment - 25.9%, bearings - 24.3%, funds for railways - 100%, vehicles - 51.3%<sup>933</sup>.

In physical terms, Soviet imports from Germany increased by 28.9 times in 1940 compared to 1939. German deliveries included manufactured goods, industrial technology and plant installations, and military supplies. According to the agreement, by May 11, 1941, the USSR was to receive for its Navy the heavy cruiser "Lutzow" with the completion of German materials, drawings of the battleship "Bismarck" and the destroyer of the "Narvik" type with 150-mm guns, 365 tons of electrodes, 31 thousand tons armor plates for ships, 2,628 tons of various pipes for ship machines, more than 1 thousand pieces of electrical equipment and equipment, 331-mm twin ship gun mounts, 6 periscopes and 2 88-mm anti-corrosion guns for submarines, one set of drawings of a three-gun turret for 406 -mm and 208-mm naval guns, mine-torpedo weapons, hydroacoustic equipment, hydrographic and optical instruments. 10 Xe-100, 5 Me-109, 6 Me-110, 2 Yu-88, 2 Do-215, 3 Byu-131, 3 Byu-133, 5 FV-58V13, 2 FV-266 aircraft were purchased for the Soviet Air Force and 1 Me-209, aircraft engines, equipment, bombs, equipment, spare parts, radio, telephone and telegraph equipment and parts for it. In the interests of the ground forces of the Red Army, 5 10-ton and 2 20-ton trailers, 1 T-III tank, chemical materials for warfare (artificial rubber buna C and SS, X and XX), 308 vehicles of various types, two sets of heavy 211 mm field howitzers, a battery of 105 mm anti-aircraft guns, various types of small arms, ammunition, fire control devices and much more<sup>934</sup>. However, the sale of such new weapons as magnetic mines was refused<sup>935</sup> The agreement stipulated that "1. The methods transferred from Germany to the USSR will be kept secret; 2. The Soviet side with goods that will

be produced using the transferred devices, installations and items, will not compete with German firms in the world market"<sup>936</sup>. This also applied to the export of special machines supplied under the transferred technology and then produced only in Germany. The Soviet leadership saw the trade agreement as a means to strengthen the industrial base of the USSR through new technologies and equipment. As German historians note, "apparently, Stalin, for his part, intended to extract the maximum benefit from economic relations and make the German war economy work to a significant extent for the USSR. This, without a doubt, met his interests in a protracted war to deplete the large capitalist states" <sup>937</sup>. Economic ties with Germany also made it possible to accelerate preparations for war and build up Soviet arms production through "targeted development of technology exports from Germany"<sup>938</sup>. Despite the fact that such goods were practically not sold to the Soviet Union by England, France and the USA, German deliveries, more than 1/5 of which were paid for by the German loan of 1939, played an important role in the development of the Soviet military-industrial complex. At the same time, the Soviet side bought in Germany only those goods that they really needed, which was a condition for Soviet deliveries to the Reich. Soviet purchasing commissions studied German production quite well, which made it possible not only to make more profitable orders, but also to get a general idea of German military and economic potential.

In 1940, Germany accounted for 52.2% of Soviet exports, including 49.9% of all Soviet exports of phosphates, 77.7% of asbestos, 62.4% of chromium ore, 40.7% of manganese ore, 75, 2% oil, 79.6% raw cotton and 77.2% grain<sup>939</sup>. Although German trade with the USSR also increased by almost 10 times, the share of Soviet imports in 1940 was only 7.6%, and in the first half of 1941 - 6.3% of total German imports<sup>940</sup>. Therefore, K. Hildebrand's opinion that "mainly Russian military (? - MM) supplies to the Third Reich helped to overcome Germany's external dependence on raw materials and food"<sup>941</sup> is true. Much more important for Germany was the transit of goods through Soviet territory to the Near and Far East. So, in April - December 1940, 59% of German imports and 49% of exports passed through the USSR, and in the first half of 1941, respectively, 72% and 64%<sup>942</sup>

Not



The main problem in historiography is the question of who was more beneficial Soviet-German economic ties. There are different data in the literature on this score (see table 21), and the conclusions of the researchers range from allegations that the USSR had invested more than 200 million marks in the German economy, before the conclusion about that the USSR owed more than 100 million marks. Be that as it may, it should be taken into account that, unlike raw materials supplies to Germany, which were quickly spent in including for the fulfillment of Soviet orders, the USSR received machinery, equipment and technology, i.e. durable goods that have been in use for all the years wars 1941-1945 Therefore, it is difficult to disagree with the statement of V.Ya. Sipolsa what more economic ties turned out to be beneficial "to those who won the war"<sup>943</sup>

Table 21

Sizes of mutual deliveries (in million marks)<sup>944</sup>

Another popular topic in historiography was the assertion that in the spring of 1941, despite the curtailment of German supplies, the USSR carefully carried out its trade obligations. However, G. Schwendemann, who studied German economic statistics, showed that at that time both sides were regularly carrying out the supply program, since "Hitler and the leadership of the Wehrmacht decided to maintain the appearance of the norm in trade relations before the start of military operations in order to disguise preparations for war and ensure as long as possible the supply of Soviet raw materials"<sup>945</sup>. Moreover, in March-June 1941, both sides stepped up their supplies, and the 2nd quarter of 1941 accounted for 63.1% Soviet and 68.5% of German supplies in the first half of the year<sup>946</sup>. On this issue in historiography, there was a strong opinion that from the German side it was about disinformation of the USSR on the eve of the attack, and from the Soviet - about the economic "appeasement" of Germany However, currently known data show that In reality, it was about mutual disinformation of the parties.

Meanwhile, Britain continued its attempts to create friction in the Soviet-German relations, using propaganda and a new discussion of the issue of trade with THE USSR. But Moscow was more interested in the question of Britain's recognition of the accession Baltic countries to the USSR and related economic problems. February 24, 1941 Mr. Cripps sounded out the opinion of the Soviet government about the desirability and possibility Stalin's meeting with the new British Foreign Minister A. Eden in Moscow. But this the idea did not find support either in London or in Moscow, where Cripps was told that "Now is not yet the time to resolve the big issues by meeting with leaders of the USSR, especially since such a meeting was not politically prepared"<sup>948</sup>. True, in the second half of March, Moscow, as it were, demonstrated "the desire to prepare ground for rapprochement" with London<sup>949</sup> that in the context of the growing crisis in the Balkans increased the interest of England in attracting the USSR to support Greece and Yugoslavia. This was precisely the goal pursued by Churchill's well-known "warning" to Stalin, based on false information<sup>950</sup>. As a result, the USSR limited itself to concluding an agreement on friendship and neutrality with Belgrade, which was received in Berlin with a clear displeasure. On April 11, 1941, in the midst of fighting in the Balkans, Cripps proposed to the USSR to provide direct military support to Germany's adversaries, and on April 18 again proposed the Soviet side to begin rapprochement with England, threatening otherwise with the likelihood reaching an Anglo-German agreement that would untie the hands of Germany in the East. IN In response, the Soviet side stated that it was England that was to blame for the current state of Anglo-Soviet relations<sup>951</sup>

Meanwhile, as a result of the diplomatic struggle in the Balkans in March and early April In 1941, the atmosphere of Soviet-German relations deteriorated sharply. Preparing for war with Yugoslavia and Greece demanded that the German command postpone the attack on THE USSR. In the conditions of the beginning of the war in the Balkans and the first successes of the Wehrmacht, the Soviet leadership undertook a number of demonstrations to show their loyal Germany position. On April 13, the Soviet-Japanese Treaty of Neutrality was signed,

which, on the one hand, gave certain guarantees of the security of the USSR in the Far East, and on the other hand, demonstrated Moscow's lack of intentions "to conclude deals with any Anglo-Saxon power" and its readiness "for broad cooperation with the participants of the Tripartite Pact"<sup>952</sup>. In the evening of the same day, Stalin and Molotov played a whole spectacle of Soviet-Japanese-German friendship at the station, and on April 15 the USSR made concessions to Germany on the border issue in the Baltic. At the same time, on April 21, Germany was handed a note verbale, which "contained a demand to take immediate measures against the continued violations of the USSR border by German aircraft." As indicated in the note, in March 1940, the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR made an exception for German aircraft, ordering them not to open fire on them until their flights became too frequent, and from March 27 to April 18, 80 such cases occurred. Therefore, the Soviet government expressed the hope that the German government would do everything to prevent similar incidents in the future<sup>954</sup>. On April 30, Hitler approved

a new schedule for the concentration of troops in the East and a new one. In the returned from Berlin on time for the start of the - meantime, Schulenburg, who had operation against the USSR - on June 22<sup>955</sup> Moscow, took a number of unofficial steps in an effort to normalize Soviet-German relations, and at the same time fulfill the order of the German Foreign Ministry to combat rumors about the imminent war in the East. Documents of Schulenburg's conversations with V.G. Dekanozov - the Soviet ambassador in Berlin, who was in Moscow - on May 5, 9 and 12, 1941 show that the German ambassador sought to encourage the Soviet side to initiate negotiations with Germany, which, in his opinion, could normalize bilateral relations. Since these statements by Schulenburg were apparently initially perceived in Moscow as an official German sounding, the Soviet leadership agreed to an exchange of letters with Berlin, which made it possible to start direct negotiations and met Soviet interests. But on May 12, it emerged that Schulenburg had conducted the previous conversations on his own initiative, without authority from his government, which he is unlikely to receive. Therefore, the Soviet side should have taken the initiative in this matter<sup>956</sup>.

Moscow continued to show loyalty to Germany. On May 6, Moscow announced Stalin's assumption of the post of chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, which was used by the Soviet side to spread rumors about Moscow's readiness to improve relations with Berlin. On May 8, Soviet ambassadors were recalled from a number of countries occupied by Germany. On May 9, a TASS statement appeared, refuting rumors about the "concentration of large military forces" of the Red Army on the western borders of the USSR, which for some reason is considered by some authors as confirming (!) these rumors<sup>957</sup>. In mid-May, the Soviet side hinted to Berlin that Stalin was ready to arrive in Germany to settle Soviet-German relations and join the USSR to the Tripartite Pact. Apparently, the German embassy in Moscow perceived this information as reliable, and Schulenburg repeatedly informed Berlin about Stalin's readiness "to take a personal part in the preservation and development of good relations between the Soviet Union and Germany." However, in Berlin they did not believe Schulenburg's reports, believing that all these measures of Moscow pursued the only goal - to involve Germany in negotiations in order to buy time and better prepare for the war. Therefore, the German leadership tried not to give the USSR such a chance<sup>959</sup> On May

10, events took an unexpected turn - Hitler's deputy for the National Socialist Party, R. Hess, flew to England. On May 12, during a conversation with Dekanozov, Schulenburg, apparently without any ulterior motive, said that "the time is not far off when they (the belligerents) must come to an agreement and then the disasters and destruction caused" by the war in Europe will stop<sup>960</sup>. The fact that on the evening of the same day it became known about the flight of Hess to England, apparently, increased the fears of the Soviet leadership regarding a possible Anglo-German conspiracy. As Molotov recalled much later, "when Stalin and I read about this, we were completely stunned! It's necessary!

near the estate of some duke ... and Hess called himself a strange name. Why not a feat of a scout ?! Stalin asked me which of our members of the Politburo could decide on such a thing? I recommended Malenkov, since he patronized aviation from the Central Committee. There was laughter! Stalin offered to drop Malenkov by parachute to Hitler, let him, they say, convince him not to attack the USSR! Just then Malenkov entered the office. We laughed so hard, as if we had lost

our minds..."<sup>961</sup> But laughter with laughter, and the situation became more and more confused; it took time to figure it out. Probably, it was during these critical days in the Kremlin that it was decided to postpone the Soviet attack on Germany, scheduled for June 12, 1941. At the same time, it was most likely impossible to completely stop military preparations without completely breaking all calculations and plans. Therefore, the concentration of Soviet troops on the western border that began on May 13-22 was slowed down and took place while maintaining a peaceful schedule. At the same time, orders were issued prohibiting the movement of troops in the western border districts and intensifying the engineering training of the theater of operations. On May 17, the USSR introduced a ban on travel around the country and especially to the western regions of foreign diplomats and journalists. Thus, the Soviet leadership tried to hide the scale of ongoing military preparations, but did not deny the presence of a large military group in the west, which was explained by the vagueness of German intentions<sup>962</sup>.

Meanwhile, England, fearing that Germany and the USSR were conducting secret negotiations that could lead to a new agreement between them, and this would be a blow to British positions in the Middle East, used information about Hess's flight in order to keep Moscow from possible further rapprochement with Berlin. The conversion of Cripps, England's defeat in the Balkans and the eastern Mediterranean, and the rather pessimistic mood in London gave rise to fears in Moscow that England would indeed agree to an end to the war. True, the information that came to Moscow from the Soviet ambassador in London in the second half of May showed that England would not immediately withdraw from the war, and the information of Soviet intelligence painted a picture of the sluggish contacts between the British and Hess<sup>963</sup>. On the other hand, on May 20, the landing of German troops began in Crete, the fighting in Iraq and the Atlantic showed that the war was going on. In addition, the United States was increasingly drawn into an undeclared war against Germany. Apparently, the Soviet leadership formed the opinion that in the summer of 1941 the USSR had a chance to go to war with Germany, while the Anglo-German war was still going on and a significant part of the Wehrmacht was pinned down in the Eastern Mediterranean and Western Europe. On May 24, a meeting of the Soviet military-political leadership was held in the Kremlin, at which, most likely, a new deadline was set for the completion of Soviet military preparations for an attack on Germany<sup>965</sup>.

England's defeats in the Balkans and North Africa gave Germany a real chance to seize the Middle East, but on May 14 the German command decided to abandon offensive operations in the Mediterranean until the autumn of 1941, when, as indicated in Directive No. 30 of May 23, after the defeat of the USSR, to resume operations in the Middle East<sup>966</sup>. In the meantime, Germany was completing the last military preparations for an attack on the USSR and was conducting a massive disinformation campaign regarding Soviet-German relations. On May 22, the German railways were transferred to an accelerated schedule, and the bulk of the troops needed to carry out the Barbarossa plan rushed to the East. On May 30, Hitler confirmed that Operation Barbarossa would begin on June 22, and on June 10, the Wehrmacht received an order to start a war with the USSR on June 22, which, however, provided for the possibility of postponing the invasion, and the troops began to pull up to the border zone<sup>967</sup>. On June 10, Moscow notified

London that no negotiations were underway with Berlin, and England promised the USSR assistance against Germany. On June 12, British intelligence concluded that German military pressure was being prepared on the USSR, and the committee of chiefs

headquarters of England decided to take measures that would allow without delay to inflict from Mosul attacks on oil refineries Baku. Having created a threat to Caucasian oil, England hoped to put pressure on the USSR so that it would not succumb to possible German requirements. Commenting on the arrival of the British ambassador in Moscow to London, the English press spread rumors about a possible alliance with the USSR. On June 13, Eden told the Soviet ambassador, that if a war between the USSR and Germany starts soon, then England is ready to provide full assistance to the USSR with its aviation in the Middle East, send a military mission to Moscow and develop economic cooperation. was sure that the Thus, until June 22, England will not Soviet-German war would still begin, and with all her might sought to ensure that the USSR did not succumb to German threats, but took a firm position, which would stimulate tension in Eastern Europe and ease the situation England.

On June 13, Schulenburg was handed a statement from TASS, broadcast at 18.00 by radio and published on June 14 in the press, which refuted rumors about the "closeness of the war between Germany and the USSR"<sup>969</sup> This document is traditionally regarded in historiography as Germany's invitation to negotiations<sup>970</sup>. V.Ya. Sipols believes it was the same the appeal of the Soviet leadership to Germany, which Schulenburg offered to Dekanozov in at the beginning. In any case, it contained a refutation of rumors about a close of May<sup>971</sup> the Soviet-German war on the initiative of Germany or the USSR, about the ongoing Soviet-German negotiations and at the same time the task of masking the Soviet military was being solved preparations, which on June 12-15 entered the final stage. More and more obvious Moscow's desire to initiate negotiations with Berlin is often seen in historiography as evidence of "the complete separation of the Soviet leadership from the real reality"<sup>972</sup>. But if you look at these actions of his from the other side, then they will be completely logical and justified. Preparing to attack Germany the Soviet leadership could not help thinking about the propaganda justification for this your step. Why not assume that the Soviet-German negotiations were needed Moscow, not for their successful completion or delay, but, firstly, for masking last military preparations and, secondly, for their subsequent disruption, which would give Moscow is a good pretext for starting hostilities. Similar assumption reinforced by similar actions of the USSR in relation to its western neighbors in 1939-1940<sup>99</sup>.

But in Berlin they were preoccupied with "not giving Stalin the opportunity with the help of any kind gesture to confuse us at the last moment all the cards"<sup>973</sup>, therefore Germany did not respond to this statement. On June 14, the last a big meeting with Hitler before going to the East, during which the military reported that all planned activities will be completed by the evening of June 21, and the time has been specified start of the offensive. On June 17, the attack order was sent to the troops<sup>974</sup> With its. On the other hand, the Soviet leadership continued its attempts to draw Germany into the negotiations. 18 June, a proposal for a new visit of Molotov was sent to Berlin, on June 21 the Soviet side through diplomatic channels tried to find out the reasons for "discontent Germany"<sup>975</sup>. But it was all in vain - Berlin was stubbornly silent, and at 3.15 am on June 22 Germany suddenly attacked the Soviet Union.

Relations between the USSR and the great powers of Europe in 1939-1941. remind classical triangle, each of whose vertices (London, Berlin and Moscow) sought to use the contradictions of rivals for its own purposes. At the beginning of the second world war, the Soviet leadership managed to use the expansionist German aspirations to weaken the positions of England and France in Europe, which was seen in the Kremlin as an important precondition for Soviet expansion. Studying events of 1939-1941 shows that it was not about the "conspiracy" of the USSR with Germany and not about "short-sighted" policy of the Kremlin. As rightly noted by P.P. Sevostyanov, "not Soviet The Union was "used" by Germany, as most bourgeois (and now

domestic. - M.M.) historians, but on the contrary, there was a masterful use by Soviet diplomacy of imperialist contradictions on a large historical scale<sup>976</sup>. In addition, the hardships of the war created stable anti-German sentiments in occupied Europe, which opened up new opportunities for expanding the activities of communist parties and strengthening the Soviet For its rather limited support for Germany, which did not go beyond benevolent neutrality, Moscow won recognition by Berlin of the Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe.

The improvement in relations with Germany led to the deterioration of Anglo-Soviet and Franco-Soviet relations, which became especially aggravated at the turn of 1939-1940, when England and France were preparing to start a war with the USSR. Now the most extreme position in the assessment of relations between Moscow, London and Paris in the autumn of 1939 - in the winter of 1940 was taken by S.Z. A case that believes that "the Soviet Union unilaterally provided active support and assistance to Germany and, because of this, was no longer a neutral state, which created a completely legitimate basis for England and France ... to take adequate response actions against the USSR, including bombardment of oil-industrial regions in the Caucasus, sending troops to help Finland and other actions, including a declaration of war." In his opinion, only fears that this could push Moscow towards further rapprochement with Berlin kept the Western allies from implementing these measures<sup>977</sup>. Probably, from the point of view of legal provisions on neutrality, such an opinion has certain grounds, but it does not take into account at all that the real international situation is always more complicated than strict legal formulas. If one takes the above point of view, then the USSR should have completely isolated itself from the outside world and not react in any way to the events that took place near its borders. Thus, Moscow should be denied the right to have and defend its own foreign policy interests.

It is clear that by its actions the Kremlin infringed on the interests of other countries, but, be that as it may, this is an axiom of the foreign policy strategy of any state. Why is it that only the Soviet Union is blamed for such actions? Not to mention the fact that the above thesis can just as well be applied to the Western allies. Wasn't it England and France "unilaterally carried out active support and assistance to Germany" throughout the 1930s, which, apparently, created for the USSR "a completely legitimate basis for taking adequate response actions" in relation to these countries. And the only thing that kept the Soviet leadership from doing this was the fear that this could push Britain and France towards further rapprochement with Berlin. Moreover, as we have seen, there was no question of any "active support and assistance to Germany" from the USSR. In any case, Italy or, for example, Sweden, to a much greater extent supported and helped Germany, but there were no claims against Rome or Stockholm from London and Paris. Not to mention the fact that the economic blockade of Germany and the claims to search the ships of neutral countries by the Western allies were a clear violation of the rights and interests of these countries. In this sense, it is difficult to unequivocally determine who exactly was the big aggressor against these neutral states, Germany or England and France.

Returning to the thesis of S.Z. Incidentally, it should be noted that it was not so much the fear of a Soviet-German rapprochement as the German operations in Scandinavia and Western Europe that eliminated any threat to the USSR from Britain and France. However, the change in the balance of power in the Anglo-German-Soviet "triangle" as Germany's military successes grew led to a change in the Soviet position. Already in the spring of 1940, significant adjustments were made to Comintern propaganda. Moscow increasingly actively defended its interests in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, the Soviet military command was completing the development of a plan for war with Germany. The British leadership, although it relied on the growing economic support of the United States, understood that it was impossible to win the war with Germany without the active participation of the USSR in it, and therefore

1941 sought to worsen Soviet-German relations by any means in order to divert German troops to the East. For its part, the German leadership, having freed itself from the land front in Europe, but having failed to withdraw England from the war, was interested in preventing the unification of London and Moscow, eliminating the potential threat from the East and seizing the raw material base of the USSR for further warfare. Just like the war between England and Germany, the war between Germany and the USSR

was engendered by the struggle for supremacy in Europe, but it was accelerated by clashes of Soviet and German interests on specific political issues. If in 1939 Berlin and Moscow were able to coordinate their territorial aspirations and by the autumn of 1940 basically implement these agreements, then from the end of 1940 the expansionist aspirations of Germany and the Soviet Union came into conflict, and it was not possible to settle them on the basis of a compromise. The Soviet-German negotiations in November 1940 demonstrated that the interests of both countries clashed most sharply in the Balkans, Finland and the Middle East. Germany, having defeated France, considered itself the hegemon of Europe and was not going to make concessions. For its part, the USSR, having easily annexed new territories, considered Finland, the Balkans and the Black Sea straits to be those regions where it had predominant interests, and also did not concede. Compromise was hampered by the fact that the parties no longer needed it, hoping to achieve their goals by military means. From November 1940, Soviet-German relations entered a new phase - the phase of direct preparation for war. In the spring of 1941, both sides sought to create the most favorable conditions for the conduct of the war and to ensure that the last military preparations were carried out in secret from the enemy in order to strike a surprise strike and seize the strategic initiative from the very beginning of the war.

## **Soviet intelligence and the problem of surprise attack**

The activities of the intelligence agencies of the USSR have always been surrounded by a veil of secrecy, and their history also remains a mystery. On the eve of the war, according to Russian historiography, despite the weakening of the repressions, Soviet intelligence had many valuable information about the intentions of Germany and the preparation of an attack on the USSR. However, I.V. Stalin did not believe this information, because he believed Hitler and the power of the non-aggression pact, sought to delay the war, which he was afraid of, not giving Germany a reason to attack. As a result, the Soviet leadership was unable to correctly determine the timing of a possible attack, which led to the tragedy of 1941. 978 Researchers unanimously condemn Stalin, who neglected important intelligence information, but only V.M. Kulish raised the question why Stalin was mistaken if he knew all this. 979 The answer to it, as a rule, was given based on the political situation. For the "Khrushchev" period, the blame for this is characteristic of Stalin, and for the "Brezhnev" - for the presence of conflicting intelligence, which disorientated Stalin. Until now, the available research, as a rule, is devoted to the fate of individual intelligence officers or episodes of intelligence work. Any general questions about the history of Soviet intelligence are still

remain in the shadows.

It has now become known that at least 5 departments were engaged in intelligence activities in the USSR - the People's Commissariat of Defense (NKO), the People's Commissariat of the Navy (NKVMF), the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) (since February 1941 the People's Commissariat of State Security (NKGB)), the People's Commissariat Foreign Affairs (NKID) and the Comintern. Their activities had their own specifics, and the history of their intelligence is known only in the most general terms. Military intelligence, created in 1918, after a series of organizational changes since 1939, was called the 5th Directorate of the NPO, the head of which since April was division commander I.I. Proskurov. The fate of this man is not known enough, even on the issue of the time of his resignation from the post of head of military intelligence, there are disagreements in the literature. So, L.A. Bezymensky and A.

they write that this happened in July, and I.V. Uspensky - that in May 1940, on July 26, 1940, the 5th directorate of the NPO as the Intelligence Directorate was included in the General Staff and Lieutenant General F.I. was appointed its head. Golikov, who simultaneously became Deputy Chief of the General Staff. Intelligence of the NKVD, created in 1920, also underwent a number of organizational changes and from July 1939 was called the 5th department of the Main Directorate of State Security (GUGB) of the NKVD, and from February 1941 it was transformed into the 1st department of the created NKGB. Since May 1939, the head of this intelligence service was P.M. Fitin. Naval intelligence was carried out by the 1st Directorate of the NKVMF, which on the eve of the war was included in the structure of the Main Naval Staff. Her chief was Rear Admiral N.I.

Zuykov<sup>980</sup>. In the literature, the question of the structure of the NKVD intelligence received some coverage. As A.S. Feklisov, in 1940, the following departments existed in the 5th department of the GUGB: three European, American, Far Eastern, Middle Eastern, information-analytical, operational-technical, personnel, financial and economic<sup>981</sup>. The internal structure of the Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff<sup>982</sup> by the beginning of 1940 is shown in the figure (p. 242). The issues of the direct activities of intelligence agencies have never been raised in Russian literature, and, apparently, this will not happen soon, which, however, is quite understandable, since many of these methods are still used today. Information about the agent network of Soviet intelligence on the eve of the war, despite the , are still fragmented.

publications of recent years<sup>983</sup>. The version of the intelligence crisis during the period of repressions of 1937-1938 is quite common in historiography, but, unfortunately, this issue is still not sufficiently studied. P.A. Sudoplatov notes that, although intelligence was damaged due to the elimination of many experienced workers, contacts with agents were basically preserved in 1940-1941. expanded even more. Created in the 1930s. reconnaissance groups and channels for obtaining information continued to function properly. True, from November 1938 to March 1939 the flow of intelligence information dropped sharply, then the situation stabilized again<sup>984</sup>, but it is not clear at what level. Apparently, the repressions affected the fate of Soviet illegal agents abroad to a greater extent, many of whom were recalled to Moscow and repressed. It is not possible to assess the state of the central apparatus of intelligence agencies due to the lack of necessary materials.

Soviet intelligence obtained information not only through agents and informants, but also through radio intelligence activities, which, according to K. Andrew and O. Gordievsky, were carried out at a very high level. existed in the 1930s. the joint radio intelligence unit of the NKVD and the NPO was disbanded in the fall of 1938. Radio intelligence specialists of the NKVD were busy intercepting and deciphering the diplomatic documentation of foreign embassies in Moscow. In February 1941, the decryption group became part of the 5th (cipher) department of the NKGB, whose major success was the decipherment of Japanese diplomatic codes<sup>985</sup>. The activities of a similar military intelligence unit are

not reflected in the available literature. K. Andrew and O. Gordievsky, referring to an official source, write that the military radio intelligence units - SPETSNAZ radio battalions - were created at the end of 1942. However, special-purpose radio divisions (OSNAZ) existed even before the war. For example, in October 1939, the Ukrainian Front had 4 OSNAZ radio divisions (368th, 370th, 372nd, 592nd), which were deployed in the border zone from Lyuboml to the Carpathians and were engaged in radio interception in southern Poland. In the Soviet garrison in Prienai (Lithuania) in November 1939, a reconnaissance point of the 363rd OSNAZ radio division, which is part of the Belorussian Front and carried out reconnaissance in East Prussia and northeast of Warsaw, was deployed. There were similar radio divisions in other border districts. By the beginning of World War II, there were 16 OSNAZ radio divisions. In addition, there was a radio brigade of the High Command consisting of 6 radio divisions and a radio regiment, which

carried out radio reconnaissance in more than 1000-kilometer band<sup>986</sup> Unfortunately, materials on the results of the activities of these units were not published. From the available documents it follows that they were engaged in radio interception, direction finding of the headquarters of the enemy troops, wiretapping and radio interference in the border zone, their activities were directed by the Intelligence Directorate through the intelligence

departments of the military districts. The data available in Russian historiography on the state of Soviet intelligence on the eve of the war are too fragmentary. Somewhat more is known about the results of the activities of the intelligence agencies. True, the analysis of documentary publications of recent years<sup>987</sup> testifies to their certain tendentiousness. As a rule, those documents are selected that contain information confirmed by subsequent events and post-war research. The published intelligence reports serve to illustrate the thesis that intelligence did its job honestly. These materials at one time appeared to confirm the version of the guilt of Stalin, who did not respond to disturbing reports, and are still used for this purpose. However, at the time of obtaining these data, everything was not so clear. It is hard not to agree with P.A. Sudoplatov, who writes that "the country's leadership was unable to correctly assess the information received through intelligence channels, but we must first deal with the question of what this information was"<sup>988</sup>. In historiography, there is no research into the intelligence data itself in terms of their reliability and objectivity, and selective publication distorts the picture of pre-war intelligence materials, since less reliable information remains unknown. In addition, the published materials did not always correspond to reality and contained mutually exclusive information. Therefore, first of all, it is necessary to evaluate the intelligence data at our disposal in terms of their reliability.

One can come across statements in the literature that "the material on the main provisions of the Barbarossa plan, approved by Hitler on December 18, 1940, was transferred to Moscow by military intelligence a week later"<sup>989</sup>. Unfortunately, this is not true. On December 29, 1940, the Soviet military attaché in Berlin, Major General V.I. Tupikov reported to Moscow that "Hitler gave the order to prepare for war with the USSR. War will be declared in March 1941. An assignment has been given to verify and clarify this information." Naturally, having received this report, Moscow demanded "more intelligible coverage of the issue." On January 4, 1941, confirmation of the reliability of this information came from Berlin, based "not on rumors, but on a special order from Hitler, which is top secret and which is known to very few people." However, the source did not see this document and his message contained the following information: "Preparation for an offensive against the USSR began much earlier, but at one time it was somewhat suspended, as the Germans miscalculated with the resistance of England. The Germans expect to bring England to their knees in the spring and free their hands east". In addition, in the repeated communication, it was no longer about March, but about the spring of 1941.<sup>990</sup>

In itself, this fact is a major success of Soviet intelligence, but it should be noted that this information was inaccurate. On December 18, Hitler did not give an order to prepare for war with the USSR (he did this back in June - July 1940), but signed a strategic plan for war with the USSR - the main document for further military planning. Information about the possible outbreak of war in March 1941 after the withdrawal of England from the war was unconditional misinformation, since the directive No. 21 "Barbarossa" indicated the approximate date for the completion of military preparations - May 15, 1941 and emphasized that the USSR must be defeated "even before the war was over. Thus, Soviet intelligence had made some - managed to obtain information that against England "<sup>991</sup> that Hitler decision related to Soviet-German relations, but its exact content remained unknown, like the code word "Barbarossa". Therefore, the authors are more right, simply retelling the report of the Soviet military attaché.